

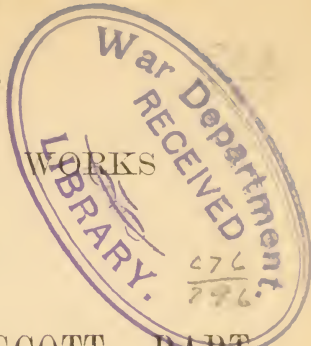


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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF



SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,

CONTAINING

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, MARMION, LADY OF THE
LAKE, DON RODERICK, ROKEBY, BALLADS,
LYRICS, AND SONGS.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

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MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

SIR WALTER SCOTT was one of the sons of Walter Scott, Esq., writer to the signet, by Anne, daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, professor of the practice of medicine, in the University of Edinburgh; and was born in that city, on the fifteenth of August, 1771, being the third of a family consisting of six sons and one daughter. His paternal grandfather, Mr. Robert Scott, farmer at Sandyknow, in the vicinity of Smailholm Tower, in Roxburghshire, was the son of Mr. Walter Scott, a younger son of Walter Scott of Raeburn, third son of Sir William Scott of Harden.

The above-mentioned Walter lived at the time of the restoration, and embraced the tenets of Quakerism; but for this he endured no little persecution, both from Presbyterian and Episcopalian. Walter, the second son of this gentleman, and father to the novelist's grandfather, was so zealous a Jacobite, that he made a vow never to shave his beard till the exiled house of Stuart should be restored, whence he acquired the name of *Beardie*.

Dr. John Rutherford, maternal grandfather to the subject of this memoir, and one of the pupils of Boerhaave, was the first professor of the practice of physic in the University of Edinburgh, to which office he was elected in 1727, and which he resigned in 1766, in favor of the celebrated Dr. John Gregory. His wife, the maternal grandmother of Sir Walter, was Jean Swinton, daughter of Swinton of Swinton, in Berwickshire, one of the oldest families in Scotland, and at one period very powerful. Sir Walter has introduced a chivalric representative of this race into his drama of "Halidon Hill."

Existence opened upon the author of *Waverley*, in one of the duskiest parts of the northern capital, which was the head of the College Wynd, a narrow alley leading from the Cowgate to the gate of the college; and before he was two years old, he received a fall out of the arms of a careless nurse, which injured his right foot,

and rendered him lame for life; but this accident did not otherwise affect his health or general activity. His mother, who had a taste for poetry, and was intimately acquainted with the poets of her day, particularly Ramsay, Blacklock, Beattie, and Burns, is said to have shown a mother's fondness when the boy made his first attempt at verse. Before Sir Walter could receive any impressions from the romantic scenery of the old town of Edinburgh, he was removed, on account of the delicacy of his health, to the country, and lived for a considerable period under the charge of his paternal grandfather at Sandyknow. This farm is situate upon a rising ground, near the bottom of Leader Water, and overlooks a large part of the vale of Tweed. In the immediate neighborhood of the farm-house, upon a rocky foundation, stood the Border fortlet called Smailholm Tower, which possessed many features to attract the attention of the young poet. At the "evening fire" of Sandyknow also, Sir Walter learned much of that Border lore which he afterwards wrought up in his fictions.

After having undergone the usual routine of juvenile instruction, Sir Walter became a pupil in the High School of Edinburgh; but as a scholar, he appears to have been by no means remarkable for proficiency. There is his own authority for saying, that even in the exercise of metrical translation, he fell far short of some of his companions; although others pretend that this was a department in which he always manifested a superiority. There is one anecdote, however, worth preserving, connected with this period. It is said, that Burns, while at Professor Ferguson's one day, was struck by some lines attached to a print of a soldier dying in the snow. He inquired by whom they were written—and none of the company having returned answer,—after a pause, the youthful poet replied, "They are by Langhorne." Burns fixed his large bright eyes on the boy, and striding up to him, said, "It is no common course of reading which has taught you this: this lad will be heard of yet."

With regard to Sir Walter's inclination for fictitious story, we have his own testimony, at the distance of nearly half a century, for this habit of his early youth: "I must refer to a very early period of my life, were I to point out my first achievements as a tale-teller; but I believe some of my old school-fellows can still bear witness that I had a distinguished character for that talent, at a time when the applause of my companions was my recompense for the disgraces and punishments which the future romance-writer incurred for being idle himself, and keeping others idle, during hours that should have been employed on our tasks. The chief enjoyment of my holidays was to escape with a chosen friend, who

had the same taste with myself, and alternately to recite to each other such wild adventures as we were able to devise. We told, each in turn, interminable tales of knight-errantry, and battles, and enchantments, which were continued from one day to another as opportunity offered, without our ever thinking of bringing them to a conclusion. As we observed a strict secrecy on the subject of this intercourse, it acquired all the character of concealed pleasure: and we used to select for the scenes of our indulgence, long walks through the solitary and romantic environs of Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, Braid Hills, and similar places in the vicinity of Edinburgh; and the recollection of those holidays still forms an *oasis* in the pilgrimage which I have to look back upon."

After having been two years under the rector of the High School, Sir Walter entered himself, in 1783, for the Humanity or Latin class in the University of Edinburgh, under Professor Hill, and the Greek class under Professor Dalzell; and for the latter, once more, in 1784. But the only other class for which he seems to have matriculated at the college, was that of Logic, under Professor Bruce, in 1785. Although he may perhaps have attended other classes without matriculation, there is reason to believe that his irregular health produced a corresponding irregularity in his academical studies. The result, it is to be feared, was, that he entered life much in the condition of his illustrious prototype, the bard of Avon—that is, "with a little Latin and less Greek." He had now given up the character of a student, with the intention of preparing himself for the bar, when he was overtaken by a severe illness; an account of which, and its important effects on his future character and course, he has thus given in the autobiographical chapter formerly referred to:—

"When boyhood advancing into youth required more serious studies and graver cares, a long illness threw me back on the kingdom of fiction, as if it were by a species of fatality. My indisposition arose, in part at least, from my having broken a blood-vessel; and motion and speech were for a long time pronounced positively dangerous. For several weeks I was confined strictly to bed, during which time I was not allowed to speak above a whisper, to eat more than a spoonful or two of boiled rice, or to have more covering than one thin counterpane. When the reader is informed that I was at this time a growing youth, with the spirits, appetite, and impatience of fifteen, and suffered, of course, greatly under this severe regimen, which the repeated return of my disorder rendered indispensable, he will not be surprised that I was abandoned to my own discretion, so far as reading (my almost sole amusement) was concerned, and still less so, that I abused the indulgence which left my time so much at my own disposal.

“There was at this time a circulating library at Edinburgh, founded, I believe, by the celebrated Allan Ramsay, which, besides containing a most respectable collection of books of every description, was, as might have been expected, peculiarly rich in works of fiction. It exhibited specimens of every kind, from the romances of chivalry, and the ponderous folios of Cyrus and Cassandra, down to the most approved works of later times. I was plunged into this great ocean of reading without compass or pilot; and unless when some one had the charity to play at chess with me, I was allowed to do nothing save read, from morning to night. I was, in kindness and pity, which was perhaps erroneous, however natural, permitted to select my subjects of study at my own pleasure, upon the same principle that the humors of children are indulged to keep them out of mischief. As my taste and appetite were gratified in nothing else, I indemnified myself by becoming a glutton of books. Accordingly, I believe I read almost all the old romances, old plays, and epic poetry, in that formidable collection, and no doubt was unconsciously amassing materials for the task in which it has been my lot to be so much employed.

“At the same time, I did not in all respects abuse the license permitted me. Familiar acquaintance with the specious miracles of fiction brought with it some degree of satiety, and I began by degrees to seek in histories, memoirs, voyages, and travels, and the like, events nearly as wonderful as those which were the work of the imagination, with the additional advantage that they were, at least, in a great measure true. The lapse of nearly two years, during which I was left to the service of my own free will, was followed by a temporary residence in the country, where I was again very lonely, but for the amusement which I derived from a good though old-fashioned library. The vague and wild use which I made of this advantage I cannot describe better than by referring my reader to the desultory studies of *Waverley* in a similar situation; the passages concerning whose reading were imitated from recollections of my own.”

His two years' residence in the country completely restored his health, and as it was necessary to pursue his studies for the bar, he attended the lectures of professor Dick on civil law, in the college, and performed the duties of a writer's apprentice under his father. In alluding to this period he says: “The severe studies necessary to render me fit for my profession, occupied the greater part of my time, and the society of my friends and companions, who were about to enter life along with me, filled up the interval with the usual amusements of young men. I was in a situation which rendered serious labor indispensable; for, neither possessing, on the

one hand, any of those peculiar advantages which are supposed to favor a hasty advance in the profession of the law, nor being on the other hand exposed to unusual obstacles to interrupt my progress, I might reasonably expect to succeed according to the greater or less degree of trouble which I should take to qualify myself as a pleader.

On the 10th of July, 1792, when just on the point of completing his twenty-first year, he was called to the bar as an advocate, and enabled, by the affluence of his father, to begin life in an elegant house in a fashionable part of the town; but it was not his lot to acquire either wealth or distinction at the bar. The truth is, his mind was not yet emancipated from that enthusiastic pursuit of knowledge which had distinguished his youth. His necessities were not so great as to make an exclusive application to his profession imperative; and he therefore seemed destined to join, what a sarcastic barrister has termed, "the ranks of the gentlemen who are not anxious for business." Although he could speak readily and fluently at the bar, his intellect was not at all of a forensic cast. He appeared to be too much of the abstract and unworldly scholar, to assume readily the habits of an adroit pleader; and, even although he had been perfectly competent to the duties, it is a question if his external aspect and general reputation would have permitted the generality of agents to intrust them to his hands.

At the time when Sir Walter entered public life, almost all the respectable part of the community were indignant at the hostile menaces of France; and numerous bodies of volunteer militia were consequently formed to meet the threatened invasion. In the beginning of 1797, the gentlemen of Mid-Lothian imitated the example, by embodying themselves in a cavalry corps, under the name of the Royal Mid-Lothian Regiment of Cavalry; and Mr. Walter Scott had the honor to be appointed its adjutant, for which office his lameness was considered no bar. He was a very zealous officer, and highly popular in the regiment, on account of his extreme good-humor and powers of social entertainment; and his appointment led to an intimacy with the most considerable man of his name, Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, and Mr. Henry Dundas, who was now one of his Majesty's secretaries of state, and a lively promoter of the scheme of national defence in Scotland. It was about this time that he became known amongst a few of his friends as a poet; and, in alluding to this period of his life, he has thus given an account of the circumstances which led him to cultivate poetry.

During the last ten years of the eighteenth century, the art of poetry was at a remarkably low ebb in Britain. Hayley, to whom fashion had some years before ascribed a higher degree of reputation than posterity has confirmed, had now lost his reputation for

talent, though he still lived admired and respected as an amiable and accomplished man. The Bard of Memory slumbered on his laurels, and he of Hope had scarce begun to attract his share of public attention. Cowper, a poet of deep feeling and bright genius, was dead, and, even while alive, the hypochondria, which was his mental malady, impeded his popularity. Burns, whose genius our southern neighbors could hardly yet comprehend, had long confined himself to song-writing.

Mr. Henry Mackenzie was the first to direct the attention of the Scottish literati to German literature, by a paper which he read to the Edinburgh Royal Society, in August, 1788. On this subject, Sir Walter continues—

“The remarkable coincidence between the German language and that of the Lowland Scottish, encouraged young men to approach this newly discovered mine; a class was formed, of six or seven intimate friends, who proposed to make themselves acquainted with the German language. They were in the habit of living much together, and the time they spent in this study, was felt as a period of great amusement. One source of this diversion was the laziness of one of their number, the present author, who, adverse to the necessary toils of grammar and its rules, was in the practice of fighting his way to the knowledge of the German by his acquaintance with the Scottish and Anglo-Saxon dialects, and, of course, frequently committing blunders, which were not lost on his more accurate and more studious companions.”

About this period—that is, in the year 1793 or 1794—Mrs. Barbauld paid a visit to Edinburgh. She lived in the house of Professor Dugald Stewart, and one evening she astonished the family circle to a great degree, by reading aloud a translation of Burger’s “Lenore,” executed by Mr. Taylor of Norwich. A friend who had heard it, told Sir Walter what impression the recitation had occasioned, and repeated to him the rude but striking passage, descriptive of the supernatural speed of the ghostly horseman and his mistress:—

“Tramp, tramp, along the land they rode,
 Splash, splash, along the sea;
 Hurra, the dead can ride apace,
 Dost fear to ride with me?”

Inspired with a strong desire to see the original, Sir Walter, with great difficulty, obtained a copy from Germany, through the kind offices of Mrs. Scott of Harden, who was a German by birth. “The perusal,” says Sir Walter, “rather exceeded than disappointed the expectations which the report of Mr. Stewart’s family had induced me to form; and the book had only been a few hours in my pos-

session, when I found myself giving an animated account of the poem to a friend, and rashly added a promise to furnish a copy in English ballad verse. I well recollect that I began my task after supper and finished it about daybreak the next morning (it consists of sixty-six stanzas), by which time the ideas which the task had a tendency to summon up were rather of an uncomfortable character."

The young poet was so much pleased with his success on this occasion, as to attempt a few more translations from Burger, particularly of the poem entitled "Der Wilde Jager." "In the course of a few weeks," says he, "my own vanity, and the favorable opinion of my friends, interested by the revival of a species of poetry, containing a germ of popularity, of which, perhaps, they were not themselves aware, urged me to the decisive step of sending a selection, at least, of my translations to the press, to save the numerous applications which were made for copies. When was an author deaf to such a recommendation? In 1796, the present author was prevailed on, by request of friends, to indulge his own vanity, by publishing the translation of 'Lenore,' with that of 'The Wild Huntsman,' in a thin quarto. . . . The fate of this, my first publication, was by no means flattering. I distributed so many copies among my friends, as materially to interfere with the sale; and the number of translations which appeared in England about the same time, including that of Mr. Taylor, to whom I had been so much indebted, and which was published in the Monthly Magazine, were sufficient to exclude a provincial writer from competition. . . . In a word, my adventure proved a dead loss; and a great part of the edition was condemned to the service of the trunkmaker." This failure, instead of disposing the new-fledged bard to retire from the field of letters, rather tempted him to proceed, in order "to show the world that it had neglected something worth notice." He pursued the German language keenly, procured more books in that language from their native country, and extended his views to the dramatic authors, so that early in 1799, he published "Goetz of Berlichingen, a tragedy translated from Goethe."

The next efforts of Sir Walter Scott were of higher promise and power, but still they were as much antiquarian as poetical; we allude to his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," and his "Sir Tristrem." The vein of poetry was by this time discovered, and the request of Monk Lewis to contribute to his Tales of Wonder, soon determined Scott's career. "Glenfinlas," "The Baron of Smayl-nome," and "The Fire-King," were the gems of the book; and poor Lewis, then at the head of the ballad school of diablerie, found himself in the predicament of a sorcerer who has evoked a demon

so much more powerful than himself as to deprive him of his wand. From that period the destiny of Sir Walter Scott was fixed—he set up, to use his own words, like a hawker, on the strength of a couple of ballads.

On Christmas eve, 1797, Sir Walter was married to Miss Margaret Carpenter, daughter of the deceased John Carpenter, Esq., of the city of Lyons, a gentleman who had fallen a victim to the excesses of the French revolution. Soon after his marriage, he established himself, during the vacations, in a delightful retreat at Laswade, on the banks of the Esk, about five miles to the south of Edinburgh.

For some years before the end of the century, Sir Walter had been in the habit of making, periodically, what he called “raids” into Liddesdale, for the purpose of collecting the ballad poetry of that romantic and most primitive district. He travelled thither, from Roxburghshire, in an old gig, which also contained his early friend and local guide, Mr. Robert Shortreed of Jedburgh, sheriff-substitute of the county. Introduced by this gentleman, Sir Walter paid visits to many of the farmers and small proprietors, among whom, or among their retainers, he picked up several capital specimens of the popular poetry of the district, descriptive of adventures of renown which took place in the days of yore, besides impressing his mind with that perception of the character of the people, which he afterwards embodied in his *Dandie Dinmont*. Mr. Shortreed, who was a most intelligent person, used to relate an amusing anecdote, illustrative of the shy manners of this sequestered race. On visiting a particular person, whose name and place of residence are sufficiently indicated by his usual designation of “Willie o’ Milburn,” the honest farmer was from home, but returned while Sir Walter was tying up his horse in the stable. On being told by Mr. Shortreed that an Edinburgh advocate was come to see him, he expressed great alarm, and even terror, as to the character of his visitor,—the old fear of the law being still so very rife in Liddesdale as even to extend to the simple person of any of its administrators. What idea Willie had formed of an Edinburgh barrister cannot exactly be defined; but, having gone out to reconnoitre, he soon after came back with a countenance of so mirthful a cast as evidently bespoke a relieved mind. “Is yon the advocate?” he inquired of Mr. Shortreed. “Yes, Willie,” answered that gentleman. “Deil o’ me’s feared for them, then,” cried the farmer; “yon’s just a chield like oursells!”

It was not alone necessary on such occasions to write down old ballads from recitation, but to store up the materials of notes by which the ballads themselves might be illustrated. On this account

Scott visited many scenes alluded to in the metrical narratives, and opened his ear to all the local anecdotes and legends which were handed down by the peasantry. He had a most peculiar, and even mysterious mode of committing these to memory. He used neither pencil nor pen, but seizing upon any twig or piece of wood which he could find, marked it by means of a clasp-knife, with various notches, representing particular ideas in his own mind; and these afterwards were strung up before him in his study at home, like the *nick-sticks* over a baker's desk, or the string-alphabet of a blind man. He seemed to have invented this algebraic system of memorandum-making for his own use; and, to all appearance, was as conversant with its mysteries as he could be with the more common accomplishment of writing. When his own pockets were inconveniently stuffed with notes, he would request Mr. Shortreed to take charge of a few; and often that gentleman has discharged as much timber from his various integuments, as, to use his own phrase, quoted from Burns, might have mended a mill. The truth is, Sir Walter was blessed with a memory of extraordinary power, so that a very slight notation was necessary to bring to his recollection any thing he had ever heard. The collections of Scott in Liddesdale, joined to various contributions from reciters in other parts of the country, formed his first publication of note, the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This work, which was issued in 1802, displayed a vast quantity of curious and abstruse learning; and, in particular, a most intimate acquaintance with a district of Scotland which had hitherto received hardly any attention either from the historian or the antiquary. Previous to this period—in December, 1799—he had been appointed sheriff of Selkirkshire, an office which rendered it necessary that he should reside a certain part of the year in Selkirkshire; and he therefore engaged the house of Ashiesteil, on the banks of the Tweed, which continued to be his country residence till he removed to Abbotsford. In 1804, Mr. Scott increased his reputation as a literary antiquary, by publishing the ancient minstrel tale of “*Sir Tristrem*,” which he showed, in a learned disquisition, to have been composed by Thomas of Erildoune, commonly called Thomas the Rhymer, who flourished in the thirteenth century. By this publication, it was established that the earliest existing poem in the English language was written by a native of the Lowlands of Scotland.

But for the ensuing circumstances of the poet's life, it will be best to resort to his own narrative, introductory to a late edition of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

The history of the rise and progress of this poem, the author has himself thus related :

“The lovely young Countess of Dalkeith, afterwards Harriet, duchess of Buccleuch, had come to the land of her husband, with the desire of making herself acquainted with its traditions and customs. She soon heard enough of Border lore: among others, an aged gentleman of property, near Langholm (Mr. Stoddart), communicated to her ladyship the story of Gilpin Horner, a tradition in which the narrator, and many more of that county, were firm believers. The young countess, much delighted with the legend, and the gravity and full confidence with which it was told, enjoined it on me as a task to compose a ballad on the subject. Of course, to hear was to obey; and thus the goblin story, objected to by several critics as an excrescence upon the poem, was in fact the occasion of its being written.

“It was, to the best of my recollection, more than a year after Mr. Stoddart’s visit, that, by way of experiment, I composed the first two or three stanzas of ‘The Lay of the Last Minstrel.’ I was shortly afterwards visited by two intimate friends, whom I was in the habit of consulting on my attempts at composition, having equal confidence in their sound taste and friendly sincerity. In this specimen I had, in the phrase of the Highland servant, packed all that was my own, *at least*, for I had also included a line of invocation, a little softened, from Coleridge—

‘Mary, mother, shield us well,’

As neither of my friends said much to me on the subject of the stanzas I showed them before their departure, I had no doubt that their disgust had been greater than their good-nature chose to express. Looking upon them, therefore, as a failure, I threw the manuscript into the fire, and thought as little more as I could of the matter. Some time afterwards, I met one of my two counsellors, who inquired, with considerable appearance of interest, about the progress of the romance I had commenced, and was greatly surprised at learning its fate. He confessed that neither he nor our mutual friend had been at first able to give a precise opinion on a poem so much out of the common road; but that as they walked home together to the city, they had talked much on the subject, and the result was an earnest desire that I would proceed with the composition.

“The poem, being once licensed by the critics as fit for the market, was soon finished, proceeding at about the rate of a canto per week. There was, indeed, little occasion for pause or hesitation, when a troublesome rhyme might be accommodated by an alteration of the stanza, or where an incorrect measure might be remedied by a variation of the rhyme.

“It was finally published in 1805, and may be regarded as the first work in which the writer, who has been since so voluminous, laid his claim to be considered as an original author.”

During the year 1806, Sir Walter collected his original compositions in the ballad style into a small volume, which he published under the title of “*Ballads and Lyrical Pieces.*” In 1808, he published his second poem of magnitude, “*Marmion,*” in which, we are informed by himself, he took great pains, and was disposed to take still more, if the distresses of a friend had not “rendered it convenient at least, if not necessary, to hasten its publication. By good fortune,” says Sir Walter, “the novelty of the subject, and, if I may say so, some force and vivacity of description, were allowed to atone for many imperfections. Thus, the second experiment was, in my case, decidedly successful.”

Marmion had been published at the very commencement of the year 1808; within a few weeks thereafter appeared “*The Works of John Dryden, in eighteen volumes, illustrated with Notes, Historical, Critical, and Explanatory, and a life of the Author, by Walter Scott, Esq.*” In 1809, he assisted in editing “*The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler,*” which appeared in two expensive volumes, in 4to. In the same year, Sir Walter contributed like assistance to a new edition of Lord Somers’ invaluable collection of tracts, which appeared in twelve volumes, 4to. He also became a contributor to an Annual Register, on a more ambitious principle than any hitherto attempted—a work at first edited by Mr. Southey.

Fortunately for all the lovers of poetry, the mountain-harp was not yet set aside amidst these more severe studies in prose, and in “*The Lady of the Lake,*” Sir Walter Scott appeared to have produced the finest specimen of which his genius was capable. In 1811, appeared “*Don Roderick,*” a dreamy vaticination of modern Spanish history; and in 1813, he published “*Rokeby,*” in which he attempted to invest English scenery and a tale of the civil war, with the charm which he had already thrown over the Scottish Highlands and Borders, and their romantic inhabitants. *Rokeby* met with a decidedly unfavorable reception, which only excited him to a more strenuous effort; and, in 1814, he published “*The Lord of the Isles.*” Even the name of Bruce, however, could not compensate the want of what had been the most captivating charm of his earlier productions—the development of new powers and styles of poesy. He afterwards published anonymously two smaller poems in succession, named “*The Bridal of Triermain,*” and “*Harold the Dauntless;*” but they made a very slight impression upon the public.

From these instances of want of success, it now became evident

to Sir Walter, that he must "change his hand," if he wished to continue in favor with the public. *Waverley* was, therefore, published in 1814; and, as the title-page was without the name of the author, the work was left to win its way in the world without any of the usual recommendations. Its progress was for some time slow; but, after the first two or three months, its popularity increased in a degree which must have satisfied the expectations of the author, had these been far more sanguine than he ever entertained. To *Waverley* succeeded, in 1815, *Guy Mannering*; in 1816, the *Antiquary*, and the First Series of the *Tales of my Landlord*, containing the *Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality*; in 1818, *Rob Roy*, and the Second Series of the *Tales of my Landlord*, containing the *Heart of Mid-Lothian*; and, in 1819, the Third Series of the *Tales of my Landlord*, containing the *Bride of Lammermoor* and a *Legend of Montrose*.

Having now drawn upon public curiosity to the extent of twelve volumes under two incognitos, he thought it necessary to adopt a third; and, accordingly, he intended *Ivanhoe*, which appeared in the beginning of 1820, to come forth as the first work of a new candidate for public favor; namely, *Lawrence Templeton*. From this design he was diverted by the publication of a novel at London, pretending to be a fourth series of the *Tales of my Landlord*. It was therefore judged necessary that *Ivanhoe* should appear as a veritable production of the author of *Waverley*. To it succeeded, in the course of the same year, the *Monastery and the Abbot*, which were reckoned the least meritorious of all his prose tales. In the beginning of the year 1821 appeared *Kenilworth*, making twelve volumes, if not written, at least published, in as many months. In 1822, he produced the *Pirate and the Fortunes of Nigel*; in 1823, *Peveril of the Peak and Quentin Durward*; in 1824, *St. Ronan's Well and Redgauntlet*; in 1825, *Tales of the Crusaders*; in 1826, *Woodstock*; in 1827, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, first series; in 1828, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, second series; in 1829, *Anne of Geierstein*; and, in 1831, a fourth series of *Tales of my Landlord*, in four volumes, containing two tales, respectively entitled, *Count Robert of Paris*, and *Castle Dangerous*. The whole of these novels, except where otherwise specified, consisted of three volumes, and, with those formerly enumerated, make up the amount of his fictitious prose compositions to the enormous sum of seventy-four volumes.

Throughout the whole of his career, both as a poet and novelist, Sir Walter was in the habit of turning aside occasionally to less important avocations of a literary character. He was a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review* during the first few years of its existence,

and to the Quarterly Review he was a considerable contributor, especially for the last five or six years of his life, during which that excellent periodical was conducted by his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart. To the Supplement of the Sixth Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, he contributed the articles "Chivalry," "Romance," and the "Drama." In 1814, he edited "The Works of Swift," in 10 volumes, with a Life of the Author; a heavy work, but which, nevertheless, required a reprint some years afterwards. In 1814, Sir Walter gave his name and an elaborate introductory essay to a work entitled "Border Antiquities," (two vols. 4to,) which consisted of engravings of the principal antique objects on both sides of the Border, accompanied by descriptive letter-press. In 1815, he made a tour through France and Belgium, visiting the scene of the recent victory over Napoleon. The result was a lively traveller's volume, under the title of "Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk," and a poem styled "The Field of Waterloo." In the same year, he joined with Mr. Robert Jameson and Mr. Henry Weber, in composing a quarto on Icelandic Antiquities. In 1819, he published "An Account of the Regalia of Scotland," and undertook to furnish the letter-press to a second collection of engravings, under the title of "Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland." In 1822, Sir Walter published "Trivial Poems and Triolets, by P. Carey, with a Preface;" and, in 1822, appeared his dramatic poem of "Halidon Hill." In the succeeding year, he contributed a smaller dramatic poem, under the title of "Macduff's Cross," to a collection of Miss Joanna Baillie. The sum of his remaining poetical works may here be made up, by adding "The Doom of Devorgoil," and "The Auchindrane Tragedy," which appeared in one volume in 1830. It cannot be said of any of these compositions, that they have made a deep impression upon the public. In consequence of these high literary achievements, his Majesty, George IV. was pleased, in March, 1820, to create him a baronet of the United Kingdom, being the first to whom he had extended that honor after his accession to the crown.

In 1825, Mr. Constable having projected a cheap series of original and selected works, engaged Sir Walter to compose a "Life of Bonaparte." This work was in progress, when, in January, 1826, Messrs. Constable & Co., became bankrupt. For many years before, Sir Walter had been in the habit of drawing bills, at long dates, upon his publishers, as payment of the copy-right of his works; and, as he occasionally was obliged with their acceptances on the strength of works not yet written, he was in some measure compelled, by a sense of gratitude, to give his name to other obligations, which were incurred by the house, for the purpose of

taking up the original engagements. Thus, although Sir Walter appeared to receive payment for his literary labors in a very prompt manner, he was pledging away his name all the while, for sums perhaps not much inferior in amount to those which he realized; so that, in the long run, he stood engaged to certain banks, in behalf of Messrs. Constable & Co., for, it is said, about £60,000; in other words, a great portion of the earnings of his literary life.

The blow was endured with a magnanimity worthy of the greatest writer of the age. In the marriage contract of Sir Walter's eldest son, the estate of Abbotsford had been settled upon the young pair, and it was therefore beyond the reach of his creditors. By this legal arrangement, indeed, Sir Walter had hardly any property to present against the immense amount of his debts. There was one asset, however, which greatly surpassed the worldly goods of most debtors—his head. "Gentlemen," said he to the claimants using the Spanish proverb, "time and I against two. Let me take this good ally into company, and I believe I shall be able to pay you every farthing." He further proposed, in their behalf, to insure the sum of £22,000 upon his life. A trust deed was accordingly executed, in which he was considered a member of the printing firm of James Ballantyne & Co.; and it appeared that the whole debts, including what must have been contracted commercially, amounted to £102,000, of which, however, the author of *Waverley* considered himself as personally responsible for by far the greater part. He then sat down, at fifty-five years of age, to the task of redeeming this enormous debt. In the first place, he sold his furniture and house in Edinburgh, and retreated into a humble lodging in a second-rate street. During the vacations, when residing at Abbotsford, he almost entirely gave up seeing company, a resolution the more easily carried into effect, as Lady Scott was now dead. He was at this time laboring at his *Life of Napoleon*, which expanded under his hands to a bulk much beyond what was originally contemplated. In the autumn of 1826, he paid a visit to Paris, to acquaint himself with several local and historical details necessary for his work. On this occasion he was received in the kindest manner by the reigning monarch, the misguided Charles X. "*The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*" appeared in the summer of 1827, in nine vols. 8vo., and produced, it is understood, the sum of £12,000.

Till the failure of Messrs. Constable and Co., the *Waverley* secret was kept inviolate; but the inquiry into the affairs of the house, rendered it no longer possible to conceal the nature of its connection with Sir Walter Scott. The copyright of these works was announced for sale, and it was necessary for Sir Walter to

reveal his secret in the best manner he could. Accordingly, at the annual dinner, 23d February, 1827, of the Edinburgh Theatrical Fund, in answer to an allusion by his friend Lord Meadowbank, he declared himself the author of all the Waverley novels—the sole and undivided author.

About the same time, the copyright of all his past novels was brought to the hammer, as part of the bankrupt stock of Messrs. Constable & Co. It was bought by Mr. Robert Cadell, of the late firm of Archibald Constable & Co., at £3,400, for the purpose of republishing the whole in a cheap uniform series of volumes, illustrated by notes and prefaces, and amended in many parts by the finishing touches of the author. Sir Walter or his creditors were to have half the profits, in consideration of his literary aid. This was a most fortunate design. The new edition began to appear in June, 1829; and such was its adaptation to the public convenience, and the eagerness of all ranks of people to contribute towards the reconstruction of the author's fortunes, that the sale soon reached an average of twenty-three thousand copies, which is a greater sale than any previous publication had ever obtained.

In November, 1828, Sir Walter published the first part of a juvenile history of Scotland, under the title of "Tales of a Grandfather," being addressed to his grandchild, John Hugh Lockhart, whom he typified under the appellation of Hugh Littlejohn, Esq. In 1829, appeared the second, and, in 1830, the third, and concluding series of this charming book. In 1830, he also contributed a graver history of Scotland, in two volumes, to the periodical work called "Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia." In the same year, appeared his "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, as a volume of Mr. Murray's Family Library." The profits of these various publications, but especially his share of the profits of the new edition of his novels, enabled him, towards the end of the year 1830, to pay a dividend of three shillings in the pound, which, but for the accumulation of interest, would have reduced his debts to nearly one-half. Of £54,000 which had now been paid, all except six or seven thousand had been produced by his own literary labors: a fact which fixes the revenue of his intellect for the last four or five years at nearly £10,000 a-year. Besides this sum, Sir Walter had also paid up the premium of the policy upon his life, which, as already mentioned, secured a *post obit* interest of £22,000 to his creditors.

During the succeeding winter, symptoms of paralysis, a disease hereditary in his family, began to be manifested, which became gradually more violent. In the following autumn, his physicians recommended a residence in Italy, as a means of delaying the approaches of his illness; and, by the kind offices of Capt. Basil

Hall, permission was obtained for him to sail in his Majesty's ship, the *Barham*, which was then fitting out for Malta. He set sail from Portsmouth, on the 27th of October, and visited Malta, Naples, and Rome. But feeling that his strength was rapidly decaying, he determined upon returning to his native country, in order that his bones might not be laid (to use the language of his own favorite minstrelsy) "far from the Tweed." His journey was performed too rapidly for his strength. For six days he travelled seventeen hours a day. The consequence was, that, in passing down the Rhine, he experienced a severe attack of his malady, which produced complete insensibility, and would have inevitably carried him off, but for the presence of mind of his servant, who bled him profusely. On his arrival in London, he ordered his journey to be resumed; and, on Saturday, July 7th, 1832, he departed by sea to Scotland, reached Abbotsford, and seemed revived. The cloud, however, gradually descended upon him; he grew weaker and weaker—and, on the 21st of September, 1832, he died amidst his family, without any appearance of pain.

Of his moral character the following interesting sketch has been given by the pen of Mr. Chambers :

"It is by far the greatest glory of Sir Walter Scott, that he shone equally as a good and virtuous man, as he did in his capacity of the first fictitious writer of the age. His behavior through life was marked by undeviating integrity and purity, insomuch that no scandalous whisper was ever yet circulated against him. The traditional recollection of his early life, is burdened with no stain of any sort. His character as a husband and a father, is altogether irreproachable. Indeed, in no single relation of life does it appear that he ever incurred the least blame. His good sense, and good feeling united, appear to have guided him aright through all the difficulties and temptations of life; and, even as a politician, though blamed by many for his exclusive sympathy in the cause of established rule, he was always acknowledged to be too benevolent and too unobtrusive to call for severe censure. Along with the most perfect uprightness of conduct, he was characterized by extraordinary simplicity of manners. He was invariably gracious and kind, and it was impossible ever to detect in his conversation a symptom of his grounding the slightest title to consideration upon his literary fame, or of his even being conscious of it."

THE
LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

A POEM, IN SIX CANTOS.

TO
THE RIGHT HONORABLE
CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,

This Poem

IS INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Poem now offered to the public is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the ancient metrical romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude in this respect than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorizes the changes of rhythm in the text. The machinery also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance.

For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is three nights and three days.

INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His withered cheek, and tresses gray,
Seemed to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them, and at rest.
No more, on prancing palfrey borne,
He carolled, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caressed,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone,
A stranger filled the Stuart's throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime.
A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door;
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He passed where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh;

With hesitating step, at last,
 The embattled portal-arch he passed,
 Whose ponderous grate, and massy bar,
 Had oft rolled back the tide of war,
 But never closed the iron door
 Against the desolate and poor.
 The Duchess* marked his weary pace,
 His timid mien, and reverend face,
 And bade her page the menials tell,
 That they should tend the old man well:
 For she had known adversity,
 Though born in such a high degree;
 In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
 Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.

When kindness had his wants supplied,
 And the old man was gratified,
 Began to rise his minstrel pride;
 And he began to talk, anon,
 Of good Earl Francis,† dead and gone,
 And of Earl Walter,‡ rest him God!
 A braver ne'er to battle rode;
 And how full many a tale he knew,
 Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
 And, would the noble Duchess deign
 To listen to an old man's strain,
 Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
 He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
 That, if she loved the harp to hear,
 He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtained;
 The Aged Minstrel audience gained.
 But when he reached the room of state,
 Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
 Perchance he wished his boon denied;
 For, when to tune his harp he tried,

* Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient lords of Buccleuch, and widow of the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

† Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father to the duchess.

‡ Walter, Earl of Buccleuch, grandfather to the duchess, and a celebrated warrior.

His trembling hand had lost the ease
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain.
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had played it to King Charles the Good,
When he kept court at Holyrood;
And much he wished, yet feared, to try
The long-forgotten melody.

Amid the strings his fingers strayed,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled,
And lightened up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.



LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,*
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower ;
Her bower, that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well !
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all ;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loitered through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire.
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

* In the reign of James I., Sir William Scott of Buccleuch, chief of the clan bearing that name, exchanged, with Sir Thomas Inglis of Manor, the estate of Murdiestone, in Lanarkshire, for one-half of the barony of Branksome, or Branxholm, lying upon the Teviot, about three miles above Hawick ; after which Branksome became the principal seat of the Buccleuch family, while security was any object in their choice of a mansion.

The extent of the ancient edifice can still be traced by some vestiges of its foundation, and its strength is obvious from the situation, on a deep bank surrounded by the Teviot, and flanked by a deep ravine, formed by a precipitous brook.

III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall ;*
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds from bower to stall ;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all :
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel :
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night :
They lay down to rest
With corslet laced,
Pillowed on buckler cold and hard ;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barred

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten ;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow ;†
A hundred more fed free in stall :—
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

* The ancient barons of Buccleuch retained in their household, at Branksome, a number of gentlemen of their own name, who held lands from their chief for the military service of watching and warding his castle. Satchell gives us the names of twenty-four gentlemen, younger brothers of ancient families, who were pensioners to the house of Buccleuch, and describes the lands which each possessed for his border service. In time of war with England, the garrison was doubtless augmented.

† The Jedwood-axe was a sort of partizan or halbert, used by horsemen. It is also called a Jedwood or Jeddart staff.

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
 Why watch these warriors, armed, by night?
 They watch, to hear the bloodhound baying;
 They watch, to hear the war-horn braying;
 To see St. George's red cross streaming,
 To see the midnight beacon gleaming;
 They watch, against Southern force and guile,
 Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
 Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
 From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.*

VII.

Such is the custom of Branksome Hall.—
 Many a valiant knight is here;
 But he, the Chieftain of them all,
 His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
 Beside his broken spear.
 Bards long shall tell,
 How Lord Walter fell!†
 When startled burghers fled, afar,
 The furies of the Border war;
 When the streets of high Dunedin‡
 Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
 And heard the slogan's§ deadly yell—
 Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
 Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
 Can Christian love, can patriot zeal,
 Can love of blessed charity?

* Branksome Castle was continually exposed to the attacks of the English, both from its situation and the restless military disposition of its inhabitants, who were seldom on good terms with their neighbors.

† Sir Walter Scott, of Buccleuch, succeeded to his grandfather, Sir David, in 1492. He was a brave and powerful baron, and warden of the west marches of Scotland; and was slain by the Kerrs in the streets of Edinburgh, in 1552. This is the event alluded to in Stanza VII; and the poem is supposed to open shortly after it had taken place.

‡ Edinburgh.

§ The war-cry, or gathering word, of a Border clan.

No! vainly to each holy shrine,
 In mutual pilgrimage, they drew ;*
 Implored, in vain, the grace divine
 For chiefs, their own red falchions slew :
 While Cessford owns the rule of Car,†
 While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
 The slaughtered chiefs, the mortal jar,
 The havoc of the feudal war,
 Shall never, never be forgot!

IX.

In sorrow, o'er Lord Walter's bier
 The warlike foresters had bent ;
 And many a flower, and many a tear,
 Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent :
 But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
 The Ladye dropped nor flower nor tear !
 Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
 Had locked the source of softer woe ;
 And burning pride, and high disdain,
 Forbade the rising tear to flow ;
 Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
 Her son lisped from the nurse's knee—
 "And, if I live to be a man,
 My father's death revenged shall be!"
 Then fast the mother's tears did seek
 To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
 All loose her golden hair,
 Hung Margaret o'er her slaughtered sire,
 And wept in wild despair.

* Among other expedients resorted to for stanching the feud betwixt the Scotts and the Kerrs, there was a bond executed, in 1529, between the heads of each clan, binding themselves to perform reciprocally the four principal pilgrimages of Scotland, for the benefit of the souls of those of the opposite name who had fallen in the quarrel. Such pactions were not uncommon in feudal times; but they were often, as in the present case, void of the desired effect.

† The family of Ker, Kerr, or Car, was very powerful on the Border Fynes Morrison remarks, in his Travels, that their influence extended from the village of Preston Grange, in Lothian, to the limits of England. The Duke of Roxburghe represents Ker of Cessford.

But not alone the bitter tear
 Had filial grief supplied;
 For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
 Had lent their mingled tide:
 Nor in her mother's altered eye
 Dared she to look for sympathy.
 Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
 With Car in arms had stood,
 When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
 All purple with their blood.
 And well she knew, her mother dread,
 Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,*
 Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

Of noble race the Ladye came;
 Her father was a clerk of fame,
 Of Bethune's line of Picardie: †
 He learned the art, that none may name,
 In Padua, far beyond the sea. ‡
 Men said, he changed his mortal frame
 By feat of magic mystery;
 For when, in studious mood, he paced
 St. Andrew's cloistered hall,
 His form no darkening shadow traced
 Upon the sunny wall! §

* The Cranstouns, Lord Cranstoun, are an ancient Border family, whose chief seat was at Crailing in Teviotdale. They were at this time at feud with the clan of Scott; for it appears that the Lady of Buccleuch, in 1557, beset the laird of Cranstoun, seeking his life. Nevertheless, the same Cranstoun, or perhaps his son, was married to a daughter of the same lady.

† The Bethunes were of French origin, and the name was accounted among the most noble in France. The family of Bethune, or Beatoun, in Fife, produced three learned and dignified prelates; and from it was descended Dame Janet Beaton, Lady Buccleuch, widow of Sir Walter Scott of Branksome. She was a woman of masculine spirit, and possessed the hereditary abilities of her family in such a degree, that the superstition of the vulgar imputed them to supernatural knowledge.

‡ Padua was long supposed by the Scottish peasants to be the principal school of necromancy.

§ The vulgar conceive, that when a class of students have made a certain progress in their mystic studies, they are obliged to run through a subterraneous hall, where the devil literally catches the hindmost in the race, unless he crosses the hall so speedily, that the arch enemy can only apprehend

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
 He taught that Ladye fair,
 Till to her bidding she could bow
 The viewless forms of air.*
 And now she sits in secret bower,
 In old Lord David's western tower,
 And listens to a heavy sound,
 That moans the mossy turrets round.
 Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
 That chafes against the scaur's† red side?
 Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
 Is it the echo from the rocks?
 What may it be, the heavy sound
 That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
 The ban-dogs bay and howl;
 And, from the turrets round,
 Loud whoops the startled owl.
 In the hall, both squire and knight
 Swore that a storm was near,
 And looked forth to view the night;
 But the night was still and clear!

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
 Chafing with the mountain's side,
 From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
 From the sullen echo of the rock,
 From the voice of the coming storm,
 The Ladye knew it well!
 It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
 And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.

his shadow. Those, who have thus *lost their shadow*, always prove the best magicians.

* The Scottish vulgar believe in the existence of spirits residing in the air, or in the waters, to whose agency they ascribe floods, storms, and tempests. The introduction of the River and Mountain Spirits therefore accords with the general tone of the romance and the superstitions of the country where the scene is laid.

† *Scaur*, a precipitous bank of earth.

XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.

“Sleepest thou, brother?”

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

——“Brother, nay—

On my hills the moonbeams play
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,

Merry elves their morrice pacing,
To aërial minstrelsy,

Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.

Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!”

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.

“Tears of an imprisoned maiden

Mix with my polluted stream ;

Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,

Mourns beneath the moon’s pale beam.

Tell me, thou who viewest the stars,

When shall cease these feudal jars ?

What shall be the maiden’s fate ?

Who shall be the maiden’s mate ?”

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

“Arthur’s slow wain his course doth roll,

In utter darkness, round the pole ;

The Northern Bear lowers black and grim ;

Orion’s studded belt is dim ;

Twinkling faint, and distant far,

Shimmers through mist each planet star ;

Ill may I read their high decree :

But no kind influence deign they shower

On Teviot’s tide, and Branksome’s tower ;

Till pride be quelled, and love be free.”

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,

And the heavy sound was still ;

It died on the river's breast,
 It died on the side of the hill.—
 But round Lord David's tower
 The sound still floated near;
 For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
 And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
 She raised her stately head,
 And her heart throbb'd high with pride:—
 "Your mountains shall bend,
 And your streams ascend,
 Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
 Where many a bold retainer lay,
 And, with jocund din, among them all,
 Her son pursued his infant play.
 A fancied moss-trooper,* the boy
 The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
 And round the hall, right merrily,
 In mimic foray rode.
 Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
 Share in his frolic gambols bore,
 Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
 Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
 For the gray warriors prophesied,
 How the brave boy, in future war,
 Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
 Exalt the Crescents and the Star.†

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
 One moment, and no more;
 One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
 As she paused at the arched door:

* Moss-trooper was the usual appellation of the marauders upon the Border; a profession diligently pursued by the inhabitants on both sides, and by none more actively and successfully than by Buccleuch's clan. Their predatory inroads were termed *forays*.

† The arms of the Kerrs of Cessford were, *Vert* on a chiveron, betwixt three unicorns' heads erased *argent*, three mollets *sable*. Crest, a unicorn's head erased *proper*. The Scotts of Buccleuch bore, *Or* on a bend *azure*; a star of six points betwixt two crescents of the first.

Then, from amid the armed train,
She called to her William of Deloraine.*

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couched border lance by knee:
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best bloodhounds; †
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride:
Alike to him was tide, or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's king and Scotland's queen.

XXII.

“Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the father well from me;
Say, that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

* The lands of Deloraine in Ettricke Forest, were immemorially possessed by the Buccleuch family, and were occasionally granted by them to vassals or kinsmen, for Border-service.

† The kings and heroes of Scotland, as well as the Border-riders, were sometimes obliged to study how to evade the pursuit of bloodhounds. A sure way of stopping the dog was to cross a brook or river, or to spill blood upon the track, which destroyed the discriminating fineness of his scent.

XXIII.

“What he gives thee, see thou keep;
 Stay not thou for food or sleep:
 Be it scroll, or be it book,
 Into it, knight, thou must not look;
 If thou readest, thou art lorn!
 Better hadst thou ne'er been born.”

XXIV.

“O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,
 Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
 Ere break of day,” the warrior 'gan say,
 “Again will I be here:
 And safer by none may thy errand be done,
 Than, noble dame, by me;
 Letter nor line know I never a one,
 Were't my neck-verse at Hairibee.”*

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
 And soon the steep descent he past,
 Soon crossed the sounding barbican,†
 And soon the Teviot side he won.
 Eastward the wooded path he rode;
 Green hazels o'er his basnet nod:
 He passed the Peel‡ of Goldiland,
 And crossed old Borthwick's roaring strand;
 Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,§
 Where Druid shades still flitted round;
 In Hawick twinkled many a light;
 Behind him soon they set in night;
 And soon he spurred his courser keen
 Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.‖

* *Hairibee*, the place of executing the Border marauders at Carlisle. The *neck-verse* is the beginning of the 51st psalm, *Miserere mei*, &c., anciently read by criminals, claiming the benefit of clergy.

† *Barbican*, the defence of the outer gate of a feudal castle.

‡ *Peel*, a Border tower.

§ This is a round artificial mount near Hawick, which, from its name (Mor. Ang. Sax. *Concilium, Conventus*), was probably anciently used as a place for assembling a national council of the adjacent tribes.

‖ The estate of Hazeldean, corruptly Hassendean, belonged formerly to a family of Scotts.

XXVI.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark ;—
 “Stand, ho ! thou courier of the dark.”
 “For Branksome, ho !” the knight rejoined,
 And left the friendly tower behind.
 He turned him now from Teviotside,
 And, guided by the tinkling rill,
 Northward the dark ascent did ride,
 And gained the moor at Horseliehill ;
 Broad on the left before him lay,
 For many a mile, the Roman way.*

XXVII.

A moment now he slacked his speed,
 A moment breathed his panting steed ;
 Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
 And loosened in the sheath his brand.
 On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint,
 Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint ; †
 Who flung his outlawed limbs to rest,
 Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
 Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
 For many a league his prey could spy ;
 Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
 The terrors of the robber’s horn ;
 Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
 The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
 When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
 Ambition is no cure for love.

XXVIII.

Unchallenged, thence passed Deloraine
 To ancient Riddell’s fair domain, ‡

* An ancient Roman road, crossing through part of Roxburghshire.

† A romantic assemblage of cliffs, which rise suddenly above the vale of Teviot. A small platform, on a projecting crag, commanding a most beautiful prospect, is termed *Barnhill’s Bed*. This Barnhill is said to have been a robber or outlaw. There are remains of a strong tower beneath the rocks, where he is supposed to have dwelt, and from which he derived his name.

‡ The family of Riddell have been very long in possession of the barony called Riddell, or Ryedale, part of which still bears the latter name. The epithet *ancient* is justified by the fact that their charters ascend to the reign of David I.

Where Aill, from mountains freed,
 Down from the lakes did raving come;
 Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
 Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
 In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
 Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
 And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow;
 Above the foaming tide, I ween,
 Scarcely half the charger's neck was seen;
 For he was barded* from counter to tail,
 And the rider was armed complete in mail;
 Never heavier man and horse
 Stemmed a midnight torrent's force.
 The warrior's very plume, I say,
 Was daggled by the dashing spray;
 Yet, through good heart, and our Ladye's grace,
 At length he gained the landing-place.

XXX.

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
 And sternly shook his plumed head,
 As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;†
 For on his soul the slaughter red
 Of that unhallowed morn arose,
 When first the Scott and Car were foes,
 When royal James beheld the fray,
 Prize to the victor of the day;
 When Home and Douglas, in the van,
 Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
 Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
 Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
 And soon the hated heath was past;

* *Barded*, or *barbed*, applied to a horse accoutered with armor.

† Halidon, near Melrose, was an ancient seat of the Kerrs of Cessford, now demolished. About a quarter of a mile to the northward lay the field of battle betwixt Buccleuch and Angus (1526), which is called to this day the Skirmish field.

And far beneath, in lustre wan,
 Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran :*
 Like some tall rock, with lichens gray,
 Seemed, dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
 When Hawick he passed, had curfew rung,
 Now midnight lauds† were in Melrose sung.
 The sound, upon the fitful gale,
 In solemn wise did rise and fall,
 Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
 Is wakened by the winds alone.
 But when Melrose he reached, 'twas silence all ;
 He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
 And sought the convent's lonely wall.

HERE paused the harp ; and with its swell
 The Master's fire and courage fell :
 Dejectedly, and low, he bowed,
 And, gazing timid on the crowd,
 He seemed to seek, in every eye,
 If they approved his minstrelsy ;
 And, diffident of present praise,
 Somewhat he spoke of former days,
 And how old age, and wandering long,
 Had done his hand and harp some wrong.

The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
 And every gentle ladye there,
 Each after each, in due degree,
 Gave praises to his melody ;
 His hand was true, his voice was clear,
 And much they longed thro' rest to hear.
 Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
 After meet rest, again began.

* The monastery of Melrose, founded by King David I., is the finest specimen of Gothic architecture, and Gothic sculpture, which Scotland can boast. The stone of which it is built retains perfect sharpness, so that even the most minute ornaments seem as entire as when newly wrought. In some of the cloisters, there are representations of flowers, vegetables, &c., carved in stone, with accuracy and precision so delicate, that we almost distrust our senses, when we consider the difficulty of subjecting so hard a substance to such intricate and exquisite modulation.

† *Lauds*, the midnight service of the Catholic Church

CANTO SECOND.

I.

IF thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;†
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruined pile:†
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.

Short halt did Deloraine make there;
Little recked he of the scene so fair.
With dagger's hilt, or the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate—
“Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?”
“From Branksome I,” the warrior cried;
And straight the wicket opened wide:
For Branksome's chiefs had in battle stood,
To fence the rights of fair Melrose;

* The buttresses of the ruins of Melrose are richly carved and fretted, containing niches for the statues of saints, and labelled with scrolls bearing appropriate texts of Scripture. Most of these statues have been demolished.

† David the First, of Scotland, who was sainted for his liberality in founding and endowing Melrose and other monasteries.

And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.*

III.

Bold Deloraine his errand said ;
The porter bent his humble head ;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod ;
The arched cloisters, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride ;
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He entered the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,†
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

IV.

"The Layde of Branksome greets thee by me ;
Says, that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."
From sackcloth couch the Monk arose,
With toil his stiffened limbs he reared ;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.

And strangely on the Knight looked he,
And his blue eyes gleamed wild and wide ;—
"And, dar'st thou, warrior ! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide ?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn ;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn ;
Yet all too little t
For knowing what had ne'er be known.
Wouldst thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance dree,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring warrior, follow me !"

* The Buccleuch family were great benefactors to the Abbey of Merose.

† *Aventayle*, visor of the helmet.

VI.

“Penance, father, will I none ;
 Prayer know I hardly one ;
 For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
 Save to patter an Ave Mary,
 When I ride on a Border foray :*
 Other prayer can I none ;
 So speed me my errand, and let me be gone.”

VII.

Again on the Knight looked the Churchman old,
 And again he sighed heavily ;
 For he had himself been a warrior bold,
 And fought in Spain and Italy.
 And he thought on the days that were long since by,
 When his limbs were strong, and his courage was high :—
 Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
 Where, cloistered round, the garden lay ;
 The pillared arches were over their head,
 And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.†

VIII.

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
 Glistened with the dew of night ;
 Nor herb, nor floweret glistened there,
 But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
 The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
 Then into the night he looked forth ;
 And red and bright the streamers light
 Were dancing in the glowing north.
 So had he seen, in fair Castile,
 The youth in glittering squadrons start ;
 Suddenly the fluttering the wheel,
 And hurl the unicorn part.‡

* The Borderers were very ignorant about religious matters. But however deficient in real religion, they regularly told their beads, and never with more zeal than when going on a plundering expedition.

† The cloisters were frequently used as places of sepulchre.

‡ The custom of throwing the *jerreed*, has prevailed in the East from time immemorial, and was imitated in the military game called *Juqqa de la* &c. which the Spaniards borrowed from their Moorish invaders.

He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX.

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They entered now the chancel tall;
The darkened roof rose high aloof
On pillars, lofty, and light, and small;
The key-stone, that locked each ribbed aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille;
The corbells* were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars, with clustered shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

X.

Full many a scutcheon and banner, riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne,†
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!‡
O fading honors of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!

XI.

The moon on the east oriel shone,§
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,

* *Corbells*, the projections from which these arches spring, usually cut in a fantastic face or mask.

† The famous and desperate battle of Otterburne was fought 15th August, 1388, betwixt Henry Percy, called Hotspur, and James Earl of Douglas. The Scots won the day, dearly purchased by the death of their gallant general, the Earl of Douglas, who was slain in the action. He was buried at Melrose, beneath the high altar.

‡ William Douglas, called the knight of Liddesdale, flourished during the reign of David II.; and was so distinguished by his valor, that he was called the Flower of Chivalry. He was slain while hunting in Ettrick Forest, by his own godson and chieftain, William Earl of Douglas, and was interred, with great pomp, in Melrose Abbey, where his tomb is still shown.

§ It is impossible to conceive a more beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture, in its purity, than the eastern window of Melrose Abbey. Sir James

By foliated tracery combined ;
 Thou wouldst have thought some fairy's hand,
 'Twixt poplars straight, the osier wand,
 In many a freakish knot, had twined ;
 Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
 And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
 The silver light, so pale and faint,
 Showed many a prophet, and many a saint,
 Whose image on the glass was dyed ;
 Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
 Triumphant Michael brandished,
 And trampled the Apostate's pride.
 The moonbeam kissed the holy pane,
 And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII.

They sate them down on a marble stone,
 A Scottish monarch slept below ;*
 Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone :—
 " I was not always a man of woe ;
 For Paynim countries I have trod,
 And fought beneath the Cross of God ;
 Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
 And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII.

" In these far climes, it was my lot
 To meet the wondrous Michael Scott ; †
 A wizard of such dreaded fame,
 That when, in Salamanca's cave, ‡

Hall has traced the Gothic order through its various forms, and seemingly eccentric ornaments, to an architectural imitation of wicker-work ; and this ingenious system is alluded to in the romance.

* A large marble stone, in the chancel of Melrose, is pointed out as the monument of Alexander II.

† Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie flourished during the 13th century ; but by a poetical anachronism, he is here placed in a later æra. He was a man of much learning, chiefly acquired in foreign countries, and he passed among his contemporaries for a skilful magician. Dempster informs us, that he remembers to have heard, in his youth, that the magic books of Michael Scott were still in existence, but could not be opened without danger, on account of the fiends who were thereby invoked.

‡ Spain, from the reliques, doubtless, of Arabian learning and superstition, was accounted a favorite residence of magicians. There were public schools,

Him listed his magic wand to wave,
 The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
 Some of his skill he taught to me;
 And, Warrior, I could say to thee
 The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
 And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone: *
 But to speak them were a deadly sin;
 And for having but thought them my heart within,
 A treble penance must be done.

XIV.

“When Michael lay on his dying bed,
 His conscience was awakened;
 He bethought him of his sinful deed,
 And he gave me a sign to come with speed:
 I was in Spain when the morning rose,
 But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
 The words may not again be said,
 That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
 They would rend this Abbaye’s massy nave,
 And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV.

“I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
 That never mortal might therein look;
 And never to tell where it was hid,
 Save at his chief of Branksome’s need;
 And when that need was passed and o’er,
 Again the volume to restore.
 I buried him on St. Michael’s night,
 When the bell tolled one, and the moon was bright;
 And I dug his chamber among the dead,
 When the floor of the chancel was stained red,

where magic, or rather the sciences supposed to involve its mysteries, were regularly taught, at Toledo, Seville, and Salamanca. In the latter city, they were held in a deep cavern, the mouth of which was walled up by Queen Isabella, wife of King Ferdinand.

* Michael Scott was much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment. He commanded him to build a *cauld*, or dam-head, across the Tweed at Kelso: it was accomplished in one night. Michael next ordered that Eildon hill, which was then a uniform cone, should be divided into three. Another night was sufficient to part its summit into three picturesque peaks. At length the enchanter conquered this indefatigable dæmon, by employing him in making ropes out of sea-sand.

That his patron's Cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

XVI.

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid;
Strange sounds along the chancel passed,
The banners waved without a blast,"—
Still spoke the Monk, when the bell tolled one!—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurred a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chilled with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII.

"Lo, Warrior! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night:
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."*
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flag-stone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the warrior took;
And the Monk made a sign, with his withered hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII.

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent;
With bar of iron heaved anain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,

* Baptista Porta, and other authors who treat of natural magic, talk much of eternal lamps, pretended to have been found burning in ancient sepulchres. One of these perpetual lamps is said to have been discovered in the tomb of Tulliola, the daughter of Cicero.

Streamed upward to the chancel roof,
 And through the galleries far aloof!
 No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
 It shone like heaven's own blessed light;
 And, issuing from the tomb,
 Showed the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
 Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
 And kissed his waving plume.

XIX.

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
 As if he had not been dead a day.
 His hoary beard in silver rolled,
 He seemed some seventy winters old;
 A palmer's amice wrapped him round,
 With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
 Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
 His left hand held his Book of Might;
 A silver cross was in his right;
 The lamp was placed beside his knee:
 High and majestic was his look,
 At which the fellest fiends had shook,
 And all unruffled was his face:—
 They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX.

Often had William of Deloraine
 Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
 And trampled down the warriors slain,
 And neither known remorse nor awe;
 Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;
 His breath came thick, his head swam round,
 When this strange scene of death he saw.
 Bewildered and unnerved he stood,
 And the priest prayed fervently, and loud:
 With eyes averted prayed he;
 He might not endure the sight to see,
 Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI.

And when the Priest his death-prayer had prayed,
 Thus unto Deloraine he said:
 "Now speed thee what thou hast to do,

Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue ;
For those thou mayest not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasped, and with iron bound :
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frowned ;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night returned, in double gloom ;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few ;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they passed,
They heard strange noises on the blast ;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices, unlike the voice of man ;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be ;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII.

"Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
"And, when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done."
The Monk returned him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped ;
When the convent met at the noontide bell—
The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead !
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasped fast, as if still he prayed.

XXIV.

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find :
He was glad when he passed the tombstones gray,

Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
 For the mystic Book, to his bosom prest,
 Felt like a load upon his breast;
 And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
 Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
 Full fain was he when the dawn of day
 Began to brighten Cheviot gray;
 He joyed to see the cheerful light,
 And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

XXV.

The sun had brightened Cheviot gray,
 The sun had brightened the Carter's* side;
 And soon beneath the rising day
 Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.
 The wild birds told their warbling tale,
 And wakened every flower that blows;
 And peeped forth the violet pale,
 And spread her breast the mountain rose;
 And lovelier than the rose so red,
 Yet paler than the violet pale,
 She early left her sleepless bed,
 The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
 And don her kirtle so hastilie;
 And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
 Why tremble her slender fingers to tie;
 Why does she stop, and look often around,
 As she glides down the secret stair;
 And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
 As he rouses him up from his lair;
 And, though she passes the postern alone,
 Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII.

The ladye steps in doubt and dread,
 Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
 The ladye caresses the rough blood-hound,
 Lest his voice should waken the castle round;

* A mountain on the Border of England, above Jedburgh

The watchman's bugle is not blown,
For he was her foster-father's son;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light,
To meet Baron Henry, her own true Knight.

XXVIII.

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set:
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, and young, and tall;
Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribbon pressed;
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair,
With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

XXIX.

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy;
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow:—
Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
Of two true lovers in a dale;
And how the Knight, with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove;
Swore he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love;
And how she blushed, and how she sighed,
And half consenting, half denied,
And said that she would die a maid:—
Yet, might the bloody feud be stayed,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX.

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
Its lightness would my age reprove:

My hairs are gray, my limbs are old,
 My heart is dead, my veins are cold:—
 I may not, must not, sing of love.

XXXI.

Beneath an oak, mossed o'er by eld,
 The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
 And held his crested helm and spear:
 That Dwarf was scarcely an earthly man,
 If the tales were true, that of him ran
 Through all the Border far and near.
 'Twas said, when the Baron a hunting rode
 Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
 He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
 And, like tennis-ball by raquet tossed,
 A leap, of thirty feet and three,
 Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
 Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
 And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
 Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismayed:
 'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
 To rid him of his company;
 But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
 And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII.

Use lessens marvel, it is said.
 This elvish Dwarf with the Baron staid:
 Little he ate, and less he spoke,
 Nor mingled with the menial flock;
 And oft apart his arms he tossed,
 And often muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"
 He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
 But well Lord Cranstoun served he:
 And he of his service was full fain;
 For once he had been ta'en or slain,
 An' it had not been for his ministry.
 All, between Home and Hermitage,
 Talked of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIII.

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
 And took with him this elvish Page,

To Mary's chapel of the Lowes :
 For there, beside Our Ladye's lake,
 An offering he had sworn to make,
 And he would pay his vows.
 But the Ladye of Branksome gathered a band
 Of the best that would ride at her command :
 The trysting-place was Newark Lee.
 Wat of Harden came thither amain,
 And thither came John of Thirlestaine,
 And thither came William of Deloraine ;
 They were three hundred spears and thre.
 Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
 Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
 They came to St. Mary's lake ere day ;
 But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
 They burned the chapel for very rage,
 And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.*

XXXIV.

And now, in Branksome's good greenwood,
 As under the aged oak he stood,
 The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
 As if a distant noise he hears.
 The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
 And signs to the lovers to part and fly ;
 No time was then to vow or sigh.
 Fair Margaret, through the hazel grove,
 Flew like the startled cushat-dove : †
 The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein ;
 Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
 And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
 Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

WHILE thus he poured the lengthened tale,
 The Minstrel's voice began to fail :

* " Upon 25th June, 1557, Dame Janet Beatoune, Lady Buccleuch, and a great number of the name of Scott, delatit (accused) for coming to the kirk of St. Mary of the Lowes, to the number of two hundred persons bodin in feir of weire (arranged in armor), and breaking open the doors of the said kirk, in order to apprehend the laird of Cranstoune for his destruction." *Abridgment of Books of Adjournal in Advocates' Library.* It is said, that, upon this rising, the kirk of St. Mary was burned by the Scotts.

† Wood-pigeon.

Full slyly smiled the observant page,
 And gave the withered hand of age
 A goblet, crowned with mighty wine,
 The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
 He raised the silver cup on high,
 And, while the big drop filled his eye,
 Prayed God to bless the Duchess long,
 And all who cheered a son of song.
 The attending maidens smiled to see
 How long, how deep, how zealously,
 The precious juice the Minstrel quaffed;
 And he, emboldened by the draught,
 Looked gayly back to them, and laughed.
 The cordial nectar of the bowl
 Swelled his old veins, and cheered his soul;
 A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
 Ere thus his tale again began.



CANTO THIRD.

I.

AND said I that my limbs were old;
 And said I that my blood was cold,
 And that my kindly fire was fled,
 And my poor withered heart was dead,
 And that I might not sing of love?—
 How could I, to the dearest theme
 That ever warmed a minstrel's dream,
 So foul, so false, a recreant prove!
 How could I name love's very name,
 Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

II.

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
 In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
 In halls, in gay attire is seen;
 In hamlets, dances on the green.
 Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,

And men below, and saints above ;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III.

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.

But the Page shouted wild and shrill—

And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill

A stately knight came pricking on.

That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,
Was dark with sweat, and splashed with clay ;

His armor red with many a stain :

He seemed in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the livelong night ;

For it was William of Deloraine.

IV.

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He marked the crane on the Baron's crest ;*
For his ready spear was in his rest.

Few were the words, and stern and high,

That marked the foemen's feudal hate ;

For question fierce, and proud reply,

Gave signal soon of dire debate.

Their very coursers seemed to know

That each was other's mortal foe ;

And snorted fire, when wheeled around,

To give each knight his vantage ground.

V.

In rapid round the Baron bent ;

He sighed a sigh, and prayed a prayer :

The prayer was to his patron saint,

The sigh was to his ladye fair.

Stout Deloraine nor sighed, nor prayed,

Nor saint, nor ladye, called to aid ;

* The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name, is a crane dormant, holding a stone in his foot, with an emphatic Border motto, *Thou shalt want ere I want.*

But he stooped his head, and couched his spear,
 And spurred his steed to full career.
 The meeting of these champions proud
 Seemed like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
 The stately Baron backwards bent;
 Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
 And his plumes went scattering on the gale;
 The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
 Into a thousand flinders flew.
 But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
 Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail:
 Through shield, and jack, and acton passed,
 Deep in his bosom broke at last.—
 Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,
 Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
 Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
 Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
 The Baron onward passed his course;
 Nor knew—so giddy rolled his brain—
 His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

VII.

But when he reined his courser round,
 And saw his foeman on the ground
 Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
 He bade his page to stanch the wound,
 And there beside the warrior stay,
 And tend him in his doubtful state,
 And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:
 His noble mind was inly moved
 For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
 "This shalt thou do without delay;
 No longer here myself may stay;
 Unless the swifter I speed away,
 Short shrift will be at my dying day."

VIII.

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
 The Goblin Page behind abode:
 His lord's command he ne'er withstood,

Though small his pleasure to do good.
 As the corslet off he took,
 The Dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
 Much he marvelled, a Knight of pride
 Like a book-bosomed priest should ride:*
 He thought not to search or stanch the wound,
 Until the secret he had found.

IX.

The iron band, the iron clasp,
 Resisted long the elfin grasp;
 For when the first he had undone,
 It closed as he the next begun.
 Those iron clasps, that iron band,
 Would not yield to unchristened hand,
 Till he smeared the cover o'er
 With the Borderer's curdled gore;
 A moment then the volume spread,
 And one short spell therein he read.
 It had much of glamour† might,
 Could make a ladye seem a knight;
 The cobwebs on a dungeon wall,
 Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
 A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
 A sheeling‡ seem a palace large,
 And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
 All was delusion, naught was truth.

X.

He had not read another spell,
 When on his cheek a buffet fell,—
 So fierce, it stretched him on the plain,
 Beside the wounded Deloraine.
 From the ground he rose dismayed,
 And shook his huge and matted head;

* There is a tradition, that friars were wont to come from Melrose, or Jeuburgh, to baptize and marry in the parish of Unthank; and, from being in use to carry the mass-book in their bosoms, they were called *Book-a-bosomes*.

† *Glamour*, in the legends of Scottish superstition, means the magic power of imposing on the eyesight of the spectators, so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality.

‡ A shepherd's hut.

One word he muttered, and no more—
 “Man of age, thou smitest sore!”
 No more the Elfin Page durst try
 Into the wondrous Book to pry;
 The clasps, though smeared with Christian gore,
 Shut faster than they were before.
 He hid it underneath his cloak.—
 Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
 I cannot tell, so mot I thrive;
 It was not given by man alive.

XI.

Unwillingly himself he addressed,
 To do his master's high behest:
 He lifted up the living corse,
 And laid it on the weary horse;
 He led him into Branksome Hall,
 Before the beards of the warders all;
 And each did after swear and say,
 There only passed a wain of hay.
 He took him to Lord David's tower,
 Even to the Ladye's secret bower;
 And, but that stronger spells were spread,
 And the door might not be opened,
 He had laid him on her very bed.
 Whate'er he did of gramarye,*
 Was always done maliciously:
 He flung the warrior on the ground,
 And the blood welled freshly from the wound.

XII.

As he repassed the outer court,
 He spied the fair young child at sport:
 He thought to train him to the wood;
 For, at a word, be it understood,
 He was always for ill, and never for good.
 Seemed to the boy, some comrade gay
 Led him forth to the woods to play;
 On the drawbridge the warders stout
 Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

* Magic.

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
 Until they came to a woodland brook;
 The running stream dissolved the spell,*
 And his own elvish shape he took.
 Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
 He had crippled the joints of the noble child;
 Or, with his fingers long and lean,
 Had strangled him in fiendish spleen:
 But his awful mother he had in dread,
 And also his power was limited;
 So he but scowled on the startled child,
 And darted through the forest wild;
 The woodland brook he bounding crossed,
 And laughed, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"

XIV.

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
 And frightened, as a child might be,
 At the wild yell and visage strange,
 And the dark words of gramarye,
 The child, amidst the forest bower,
 Stood rooted like a lilye flower;
 And when at length, with trembling pace,
 He sought to find where Branksome lay,
 He feared to see that grisly face
 Glare from some thicket on his way.
 Thus, starting oft, he journeyed on,
 And deeper in the wood is gone,—
 For aye the more he sought his way,
 The farther still he went astray,—
 Until he heard the mountains round
 Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV.

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouthed bark
 Comes nigher still, and nigher;

* It is a firm article of popular faith, that no enchantment can subsist in a living stream. Nay, if you can interpose a brook betwixt you and witches, spectres, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety. Burns's inimitable *Tam o' Shanter* turns entirely upon such a circumstance.

Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
 His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
 And his red eye shot fire.
 Soon as the wildered child saw he,
 He flew at him right furiouslie.
 I ween you would have seen with joy
 The bearing of the gallant boy,
 When, worthy of his noble sire,
 His wet cheek glowed 'twixt fear and ire!
 He faced the blood-hound manfully,
 And held his little bat on high;
 So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
 At cautious distance hoarsely bayed.
 But still in act to spring;
 When dashed an archer through the glade,
 And when he saw the hound was stayed,
 He drew his tough bow-string;
 But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
 Ho! shoot not, Edward—'tis a boy!"

XVI.

The speaker issued from the wood,
 And checked his fellow's surly mood,
 And quelled the ban-dog's ire:
 He was an English yeoman good,
 And born in Lancashire.
 Well could he hit a fallow-deer
 Five hundred feet him fro;
 With hand more true, and eye more clear,
 No archer bended bow.
 His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
 Set off his sun-burned face;
 Old England's sign, St. George's cross,
 His barret-cap did grace;
 His bugle-horn hung by his side,
 All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
 And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
 Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
 Reached scantily to his knee;
 And, at his belt, of arrows keen

A furbished sheaf bore he ;
 His buckler scarce in breadth a span,
 No longer fence had he ;
 He never counted him a man,
 Would strike below the knee .
 His slackened bow was in his hand,
 And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.*

XVIII.

He would not do the fair child harm,
 But held him with his powerful arm,
 That he might neither fight nor flee ;
 For when the Red-Cross spied he,
 The boy strove long and violently.
 "Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
 "Edward, methinks we have a prize!
 This boy's fair face, and courage free,
 Shows he is come of high degree."

XIX.

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
 For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
 And, if thou dost not set me free,
 False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!
 For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
 And William of Deloraine, good at need,
 And every Scott from Esk to Tweed;
 And, if thou dost not let me go,
 Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
 I'll have thee hanged to feed the crow!"

XX.

"Gramercy, for thy good-will, fair boy!
 My mind was never set so high ;
 But if thou art chief of such a clan,
 And art the son of such a man,
 And ever comest to thy command,
 Our wardens had need to keep in good order
 My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
 Thou'lt make them work upon the Border."

* This sketch of an English yeoman is imitated from Drayton's account of Robin Hood and his followers. To wound an antagonist in the thigh, or leg was reckoned contrary to the law of arms.

Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
 For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
 I think our work is well begun,
 When we have taken thy father's son."

XXI.

Although the child was led away,
 In Branksome still he seemed to stay,
 For so the Dwarf his part did play;
 And, in the shape of that young boy,
 He wrought the castle much annoy.
 The comrades of the young Buccleuch
 He pinched, and beat, and overthrew;
 Nay, some of them he well-nigh slew.
 He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire;
 And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
 He lighted the match of his bandelier,*
 And woefully scorched the hackbuteer.†
 It may hardly be thought, or said,
 The mischief that the urchin made,
 Till many of the castle guessed,
 That the young Baron was possessed.

XXII.

Well I ween, the charm he held
 The noble Ladye had soon dispelled;
 But she was deeply busied then
 To tend the wounded Deloraine.
 Much she wondered to find him lie,
 On the stone threshold stretched along;
 She thought some spirit of the sky
 Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong,
 Because, despite her precept dread,
 Perchance he in the Book had read;
 But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
 And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
 And with a charm she stanch'd the blood;‡

* *Bandelier*, belt for carrying ammunition. † *Hackbuteer*, musketeer.

‡ See several charms for this purpose in Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, p. 273.

She bade the gash be cleansed and bound :
 No longer by his couch she stood ;
 But she has ta'en the broken lance,
 And washed it from the clotted gore,
 And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.*
 William of Deloraine in trance,
 Whene'er she turned it round and round,
 Twisted, as if she galled his wound.
 Then to her maidens she did say,
 That he should be whole man and sound,
 Within the course of a night and day.
 Full long she toiled ; for she did rue
 Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV.

So passed the day—the evening fell,
 'Twas near the time of curfew bell ;
 The air was mild, the wind was calm,
 The stream was smooth, the dew was balm ;
 E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
 Enjoyed and blessed the lovely hour.
 Far more fair Margaret loved and blessed
 The hour of silence and of rest.
 On the high turret sitting lone,
 She waked at times the lute's soft tone ;
 Touched a wild note, and all between
 Thought of the bower of hawthorns green ;
 Her golden hair streamed free from band,
 Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
 Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
 For lovers love the western star.

XXV.

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
 That rises slowly to her ken,
 And, spreading broad its wavering light,
 Shakes its loose tresses on the night ?
 Is yon red glare the western star ?—
 O, 'tis the beacon-blaze of war !

* This idea is taken from Sir Kenelm Digby's account of his sympathetic powder, with which he cured all wounds by merely anointing with it the weapon that had inflicted them.

Scarce could she draw her tightened breath;
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI.

The warder viewed it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river, rung around.
The blast alarmed the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all:
Far downward, in the castle-yard,
Full many a torch and cresset glared;
And helms and plumes, confusedly tossed,
Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was reddened by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud.—
“On Penchryst glows a bale* of fire,
And three are kindling on Priestthaughswire;†
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome,‡ every man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout.—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
For, when they see the blazing bale,
Elliot and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life,
And warn the warden of the strife.
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise.”§

* *Bale*, beacon-fagot.

† See note on p. 65.

‡ *Mount for Branksome*, was the gathering word of the Scotts.

§ On account of the clannish feelings of relationship that subsisted among the Borderers, a Border chief could muster a large force at a very short notice, whether for the purpose of surprise or rescue.

XXVIII.

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,

While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats with clamor dread,
The ready horsemen sprung;
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!

In hasty route,
The horsemen galloped forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's* slumbering brand,
And ruddy blushed the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,

All flaring and uneven,
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen;
Each with warlike tidings fraught:
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.

They gleamed on many a dusky tarn,†
Haunted by the lonely earn;‡
On many a cairn's§ gray pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
That all should bowne|| them for the Border.

* *Need-fire*, beacon. † *Tarn*, a mountain lake. ‡ *Earn*, a Scottish eagle.

§ The cairns, or piles of loose stone, which crown the summit of most of our Scottish hills, seem usually to have been sepulchral monuments. Six flat stones are commonly found in the centre, forming a cavity of greater or smaller dimensions, to which an urn is often placed.

|| *Bowne*, make ready.

XXX.

The livelong night in Branksome rang
 The ceaseless sound of steel ;
 The castle-bell, with backward clang,
 Sent forth the larum peal ;
 Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
 Where massy stone and iron bar
 Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
 To whelm the foe with deadly shower ;
 Was frequent heard the changing guard,
 And watchword from the sleepless ward ;
 While, wearied by the endless din,
 Blood-hound and ban-dog yelled within.

XXXI.

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
 Shared the gray Seneschal's high toil,
 And spoke of danger with a smile ;
 Cheered the young knights, and council sage
 Held with the chiefs of riper age.
 No tidings of the foe were brought,
 Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
 Nor in what time the truce he sought.
 Some said, that there were thousands ten,
 And others weened that it was naught
 But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
 Who came to gather in black-mail ;*
 And Liddesdale, with small avail,
 Might drive them lightly back agen.
 So passed the anxious night away,
 And welcome was the peep of day.

CEASED the high sound—the listening throng
 Applaud the Master of the Song ;
 And marvel much, in helpless age,
 So hard should be his pilgrimage.
 Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
 His wandering toil to share and cheer ;
 No son, to be his father's stay,
 And guide him on the rugged way ?—
 “Aye! once he had—but he was dead!”

* Protection-money exacted by freebooters.

Upon the harp he stooped his head,
 And busied himself the strings withal,
 To hide the tear, that fain would fall.
 In solemn measure, soft and slow,
 Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide
 The glaring bale-fires* blaze no more;
 No longer steel-clad warriors ride
 Along thy wild and willowed shore:
 Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
 All, all is peaceful, all is still,
 As if thy waves, since Time was born,
 Since first they rolled upon the Tweed,
 Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
 Nor started at the bugle-horn.

II.

Unlike the tide of human time,
 Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
 Retains each grief, retains each crime,
 Its earliest course was doomed to know,
 And, darker as it downward bears,
 Is stained with past and present tears.
 Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
 It still reflects to memory's eye
 The hour, my brave, my only boy,
 Fell by the side of great Dundee.†
 Why, when the volleying musket played

* The Border beacons, from their number and position, formed a sort of telegraphic communication with Edinburgh. The act of parliament, 1455, c. 43, directs that one bale or fagot shall be warning of the approach of the English in any manner; two bales, that they are *coming indeed*; four bales blazing beside each other, that the enemy are in great force.

† The Viscount of Dundee, slain in the battle of Killycrankie.

Against the bloody Highland blade,
 Why was not I beside him laid!—
 Enough—he died the death of fame;
 Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III.

Now, over Border dale and fell,
 Full wide and far was terror spread;
 For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
 The peasant left his lowly shed.*
 The frightened flocks and herds were pent
 Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
 And maids and matrons dropped the tear,
 While ready warriors seized the spear.
 From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
 Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
 Which, curling in the rising sun,
 Showed southern ravage was begun.†

IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
 "Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
 Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,‡
 Comes wading through the flood.
 Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
 At his lone gate, and prove the lock;
 It was but last St. Barnabright
 They sieged him a whole summer night,
 But fled at morning; well they knew,
 In vain he never twanged the yew.
 Right sharp has been the evening shower,
 That drove him from his Liddel tower;

* The Morasses were the usual refuge of the Border herdsman on the approach of an English army. Caves, hewed in the most dangerous and inaccessible places, also afforded an occasional retreat.

† The mutual cruelties of the Borderers, and the personal hatred of the Wardens, gave to the Border wars, between England and Scotland, a character of savage atrocity which could not be paralleled even in the wars of the sixteenth century.

‡ Watt Tinlinn was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held for his Border service a small tower on the frontiers of Liddesdale. Watt was, by profession, a *sutor* (shoemaker), but, by inclination and practice, an archer and warrior.

And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
 "I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid."*

V.

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
 Entered the echoing barbican.
 He led a small and shaggy nag,
 That through a bog, from hag to hag,†
 Could bound like any Billhope stag:‡
 It bore his wife and children twain;
 A half-clothed serf§ was all their train:
 His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-browed,
 Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,||
 Laughed to her friends among the crowd.
 He was of stature passing tall,
 But sparely formed, and lean withal:
 A battered morion on his brow;
 A leathern jack, as fence enow,
 On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
 A border-axe behind was slung;
 His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
 Seemed newly dyed with gore;
 His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
 His hardy partner bore.

VI.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
 The tidings of the English foe:—
 "Belted Will Howard is marching here,¶
 And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear,

* An inroad commanded by the Warden in person.

† The broken ground in a bog.

‡ Billhope was famous among hunters for bucks and roes.

§ Bondsman.

|| The Borderers, on account of being exposed to having their houses burned or plundered, were anxious to display splendor in decorating and ornamenting their females.

¶ Lord William Howard, third son of Thomas, duke of Norfolk. By a poetical anachronism, he is introduced into the romance a few years earlier than he actually flourished. He was warden of the Western Marches; and from the rigor with which he repressed the Border excesses, the name of Belted Will Howard is still famous in our traditions. The well-known name of Dacre is derived from the exploits of one of their ancestors at the siege of Acre or Ptolemais, under Richard Cœur de Lion. The Lord Dacre of this

And all the German hagbut-men,*
 Who have long lain at Askertain :
 They crossed the Liddel at curfew hour,
 And burned my little lonely tower ;
 The fiend receive their souls therefor !
 It had not been burned this year and more.
 Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
 Served to guide me on my flight ;
 But I was chased the livelong night.
 Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
 Fast upon my traces came,
 Until I turned at Priestthaugh-Scrogg,
 And shot their horses in the bog,
 Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
 I had him long at high despite :
 He drove my cows last Fastern's night."

VII.

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
 Fast hurrying in, confirmed the tale ;
 As far as they could judge by ken,
 Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
 Three thousand armed Englishmen.—
 Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
 From Teviot, Aill, and Etrick shade,
 Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.

VIII.

From fair St. Mary's silver wave,
 From dreary Gamescleuch's dusky height,
 His ready lances Thirlestane brave†
 Arrayed beneath a banner bright,

period, was a man of hot and obstinate character, as appears from some particulars of Lord Surrey's letter to Henry VIII., giving an account of his behavior at the siege and storm of Jedburgh.

* In the wars with Scotland, Henry VIII. and his successors employed numerous bands of mercenary troops. At the battle of Pinky there were in the English army six hundred hackbuteers or *musketeers* on foot, and two hundred on horseback, composed chiefly of foreigners. From the battle-pieces of the ancient Flemish painters, we learn that the Low-Country and German soldiers marched to an assault with their right knees bared.

† When James had assembled his nobility at Fala, to invade England, and was disappointed by their refusal, Sir John Scott of Thirlestane alone de-

The treasured fleur-de-luce he claims
 To wreath his shield, since royal James,
 Encamped by Fala's mossy wave,
 The proud distinction grateful gave,
 For faith 'mid feudal jars ;
 What time, save Thirlestane alone,
 Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
 Would march to southern wars ;
 And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
 Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne :
 Hence his high motto shines revealed,—
 "Ready, aye ready" for the field.

IX.

An aged knight, to danger steeled,
 With many a moss-trooper, came on :
 And azure in a golden field,
 The stars and crescent graced his shield,
 Without the bend of Murdieston.*
 Wide lay his lands round Oakwood-tower,
 And wide round haunted Castle-Ower ;
 High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
 His wood-embosomed mansion stood ;
 In the dark glen, so deep below,
 The herds of plundered England low ;
 His bold retainers' daily food,
 And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
 Marauding chief! his sole delight
 The moonlight raid, the morning fight ;
 Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
 In youth, might tame his rage for arms ;

clared himself ready to follow the king wherever he should lead. In memory of his fidelity, James granted to his family a charter of arms, entitling them to bear a border of fleurs-de-luce, similar to the treasure in the royal arms, with a bundle of spears for the crest ; motto, *Ready, aye ready*.

* Walter Scott of Harden, who flourished during the reign of Queen Mary, was a renowned Border freebooter, whose castle was situate upon the very brink of a dark and precipitous dell, through which a scanty rivulet steals to meet the Borthwick. In the recess of this glen he is said to have kept his spoil, which served for the daily maintenance of his retainers, until the production of a pair of clean spurs in a covered dish, announced to the hungry band, that they must ride for a supply of provisions. He was married to Mary Scott, called in song the Flower of Yarrow.

And still, in age, he spurned at rest,
 And still his brows the helmet pressed,
 Albeit the blanched locks below
 Where white as Dinlay's spotless snow :
 Five stately warriors drew the sword
 Before their father's band ;
 A braver knight than Harden's lord
 Ne'er belted on a brand.

X.

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
 Came trooping down the Todshawhill ;
 By the sword they won their land,
 And by their sword they hold it still.
 Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
 How thy sires won fair Eskdale.—
 Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
 The Beattisons were his vassals there.
 The Earl was gentle, and mild of mood,
 The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude ;
 High of heart, and haughty of word,
 Little they reck'd of a tame liege lord.
 The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
 Homage and seignory to claim :
 Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot* he sought,
 Saying, " Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
 — " Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
 Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need ;
 Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,
 I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."—
 Word on word gave fuel to fire,
 Till so highly blazed the Beattison's ire,
 But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
 The vassals there their lord had slain.
 Sore he plied both whip and spur,
 As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir ;
 And it fell down a weary weight,
 Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI.

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
 Full fain avenged would he be.

* The feudal superior, in certain cases, was entitled to the best horse of the vassal, in the name of Heriot, or Herezeld.

In haste to Branksome's lord he spoke,
Saying—"Take these traitors to thy yoke;
For a cast of hawks, and a purse of gold,
All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold:
Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
If thou leavest on Eske a landed man;
But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold;
To Eskdale soon he spurr'd amain,
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merry men in the midst of the hill,
And bade them hold them close and still;
And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said:—
"Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head;
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due,
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue.
If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind."

XII.

Loudly the Beattison laughed in scorn;
"Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot,
To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."—
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse,
That the dun deer started at fair Craikcross;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the gray mountain-mist there did lances
appear;
And the third blast rang with such a din,
That the echoes answered from Pentoun-linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied, and lances broke.
For each scornful word the Galliard had said.

A Beattison on the field was laid.
 His own good sword the chieftain drew,
 And he bore the Galliard through and through ;
 Where the Beattisons' blood mixed with the rill,
 The Galliard's-Haugh men call it still.
 The Scotts have scatter'd the Beattison clan,
 In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
 The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
 Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

XIII.

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
 And warriors more than I may name ;
 From Yarrow-cleuch to Hindhaugh-swar,
 From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen,
 Trooped man and horse, and bow and spear ;
 Their gathering word was Bellenden.*
 And better hearts o'er Border sod
 To siege or rescue never rode.
 The Ladye marked the aids come in,
 And high her heart of pride arose ;
 She bade her youthful son attend,
 That he might know his father's friend,
 And learn to face his foes.
 "The boy is ripe to look on war ;
 I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
 And his true arrow struck afar
 The raven's nest upon the cliff ;
 The Red Cross, on a southern breast,
 Is broader than the raven's nest :
 Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to wield,
 And o'er him hold his father's shield."

XIV.

Well may you think, the wily Page
 Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
 He counterfeited childish fear,
 And shrieked, and shed full many a tear,
 And moaned and plained in manner wild.
 The attendants to the Ladye told,

* Bellenden is situated near the head of Borthwick water, and being in the centre of the possessions of the Scotts, was frequently used as their place of rendezvous and gathering word.

Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
 That wont to be so free and bold.
 Then wrathful was the noble dame;
 She blushed blood-red for very shame:—
 “Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
 Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
 Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
 To Rangleburn’s lonely side.—
 Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
 That coward should e’er be son of mine!”

XV.

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
 To guide the counterfeited lad.
 Soon as his palfrey felt the weight
 Of that ill-omened elvish freight,
 He bolted, sprung, and reared amain,
 Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
 It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
 To drive him but a Scottish mile;
 But, as a shallow brook they crossed,
 The elf, amid the running stream,
 His figure changed, like form in dream,
 And fled, and shouted, “Lost! lost! lost!”
 Full fast the urchin ran and laughed,
 But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
 Whistled from startled Tinlinn’s yew,
 And pierced his shoulder through and through.
 Although the imp might not be slain,
 And though the wound soon healed again,
 Yet, as he ran, he yelled for pain;
 And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
 Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI.

Soon on the hill’s steep verge he stood,
 That looks o’er Branksome’s towers and wood;
 And martial murmurs, from below,
 Proclaimed the approaching southern foe.
 Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
 Were border-pipes and bugles blown;
 The coursers’ neighing he could ken,
 And measured tread of marching men;

While broke at times the solemn hum,
 The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
 And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
 Above the copse appear;
 And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
 Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XVII.

Light forayers first, to view the ground,
 Spurred their fleet coursers loosely round.
 Behind, in close array and fast,
 The Kendal archers, all in green,
 Obedient to the bugle blast,
 Advancing from the wood are seen.
 To back and guard the archer band,
 Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand;
 A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
 With kirtle's white, and crosses red,
 Arrayed beneath the banner tall
 That streamed o'er Acre's conquered wall;
 And minstrels, as they marched in order,
 Played, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow,
 The mercenaries, firm and slow,
 Moved on to fight, in dark array,
 By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
 Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
 And sold their blood for foreign pay.
 The camp their home, their law the sword,
 They knew no country, owned no lord.*
 They were not armed like England's sons,
 But bore the leven-darting guns;
 Buff-coats, all frounced and 'broidered o'er,
 And morsing-hornst† and scarfs they wore:
 Each better knee was bared, to aid

* Such were the mercenary soldiers who figure in the middle ages, under the names of Brabançons, Condottieri, and Free-Companions, who farmed their services to the best bidders, and proclaimed themselves "the friends of God, and enemies of all the world."

† Powder-flasks.

The warriors in the escalade ;
All, as they marched, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XIX.

But louder still the clamor grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry ;
His men-at-arms, with glaive and spear,
Brought up the battle's glittering rear.
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen ;
With favor in his crest, or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.
So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthened lines display ;
Then called a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, " St. George, for merry England !"

XX.

Now every English eye, intent,
On Branksome's armed towers was bent ;
So near they were, that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow ;
On battlement and bartizan
Gleamed axe, and spear, and partisan :
Falcon and culver,* on each tower,
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower ;
And flashing armor frequent broke
From eddyng whirls of sable smoke,
Where, upon tower and turret head,
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reeked, like a witch's cauldron red.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breastplate spread ;

* Ancient pieces of artillery.

Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
 He ruled his eager courser's gait;
 Forced him, with chastened fire, to prance,
 And, high curvetting, slow advance:
 In sign of truce, his better hand
 Displayed a peeled willow-wand;
 His squire, attending in the rear,
 Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.*
 When they espied him riding out,
 Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
 Sped to the front of their array,
 To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII.

"Ye English warden lords, of you
 Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
 Why, 'gainst the truce of Border-tide,
 In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
 With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,
 And all your mercenary band,
 Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
 My Ladye reads you swith return;
 And, if but one poor straw you burn,
 Or do our towers so much molest,
 As scare one swallow from her nest,
 St. Mary! but we'll light a brand,
 Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."²²

XXIII.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
 But calmer Howard took the word:—
 "May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
 To seek the castle's outward wall;
 Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show,
 Both why we came, and when we go."
 The message sped, the noble Dame
 To the wall's outward circle came;
 Each chief around leaned on his spear,
 To see the pursuivant appear.

* A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when any one broke his word, to expose this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting.

All in Lord Howard's livery dressed,
 The lion argent decked his breast;
 He led a boy of blooming hue—
 O sight to meet a mother's view!
 It was the heir of great Buecleuch.
 Obeisance meet the herald made,
 And thus his master's will he said.

XXIV.

“It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
 'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords:
 But yet they may not tamely see.
 All through the western wardenry,
 Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
 And burn and spoil the Border-side;
 And ill beseems your rank and birth
 To make your towers a flemens-firth.*
 We claim from thee, William of Deloraine,
 That he may suffer march-treason pain:†
 It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
 He pricked to Stapleton on Leven,
 Harried‡ the lands of Richard Musgrave,
 And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
 Then, since a lone and widowed Dame
 These restless riders may not tame,
 Either receive within thy towers
 Two hundred of my master's powers,
 Or straight they sound their warison,§
 And storm and spoil thy garrison;
 And this fair boy, to London led,
 Shall good King Edward's page be bred.”

XXV.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
 And stretched his little arms on high;
 Implored for aid each well-known face,
 And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.

* An asylum for outlaws.

† Several species of offences, peculiar to the Border, constituted what was called march-treason. Among others was the crime of riding, or causing to ride, against the opposite country during the time of truce.

‡ Plundered.

§ Note of assault.

A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
 Gushed to her eye the unbidden tear ;
 She gazed upon the leaders round,
 And dark and sad each warrior frowned ;
 Then, deep within her sobbing breast
 She locked the struggling sigh to rest ;
 Unaltered and collected stood,
 And thus replied, in dauntless mood.

XXVI.

"Say to your Lords of high emprise,
 Who war on woman and on boys,
 That either William of Deloraine
 Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,*
 Or else he will the combat take
 'Gainst Musgrave, for his honor's sake.
 No knight in Cumberland so good,
 But William may count with him kin and blood.
 Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
 When English blood swelled Ancram ford ; †
 And but that Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
 And bare him ably in the flight,
 Himself had seen him dubbed a knight.
 For the young heir of Branksome's line,
 God be his aid, and God be mine ;
 Through me no friend shall meet his doom ;
 Here while I live, no foe finds room.
 Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
 Take our defiance loud and high ;
 Our slogan is their lyke-wake ‡ dirge,
 Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

* In dubious cases, the innocence of Border-criminals was occasionally referred to their own oath.

† The dignity of knighthood, according to the original institution, had this peculiarity, that it did not flow from the monarch, but could be conferred by one who himself possessed it, upon any squire who, after due probation, was found to merit the honor of chivalry. The battle of Ancram-Moor, or Peniel-heuch, which was fought A. D. 1545, was considered sufficient probation for that honor. The English, commanded by Sir Ralph Evers and Sir Brian Latoun, were totally routed, and both their leaders slain in the action. The Scottish army was commanded by Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, assisted by the laird of Buccleuch and Norman Lesley.

‡ *Lyke-wake*, the watching a corpse previous to interment.

XXVII.

Proud she looked round, applause to claim—
 Then lightened Thirlestane's eye of flame ;
 His bugle Watt of Harden blew ;
 Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
 To heaven the Border slogan rung,
 "St. Mary for the young Buccleuch !"
 The English war-cry answered wide,
 And forward bent each southern spear ;
 Each Kendal archer made a stride,
 And drew the bow-string to his ear :
 Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown ;
 But, ere a gray-goose shaft had flown,
 A horseman galloped from the rear.

XXVIII.

" Ah ! noble Lords ! " he, breathless, said,
 " What treason has your march betrayed ?
 What make you here, from aid so far,
 Before you walls, around you war ?
 Your foeman triumph in the thought,
 That in the toils the lion's caught.
 Already on dark Ruberslaw
 The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw : *
 The lances, waving in his train,
 Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain,
 And on the Liddel's northern strand,
 To bar retreat to Cumberland,
 Lord Maxwell ranks his merry-men good,
 Beneath the eagle and the rood ;
 And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
 Have to proud Angus come ;
 And all the Merse and Lauderdale
 Have risen with haughty Home.
 An exile from Northumberland,
 In Liddesdale I've wandered long ;
 But still my heart was with merry England,
 And cannot brook my country's wrong,
 And hard I've spurred all night to show
 The mustering of the coming foe."

* *Weapon-schaw*, the military array of a courtly.

XXIX.

“And let them come!” fierce Dacre cried;
 “For soon yon crest, my father’s pride,
 That swept the shores of Judah’s sea,
 And waved in gales of Galilee,
 From Branksome’s highest towers displayed,
 Shall mock the rescue’s lingering aid!—
 Level each harquebuss on row;
 Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
 Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
 Dacre for England, win or die!”

XXX.

“Yet hear,” quoth Howard, “calmly hear,
 Nor deem my words the words of fear:
 For who in field or foray slack
 Saw the blanche lion e’er fall back?*

But thus to risk our Border flower
 In strife against a kingdom’s power,
 Ten thousand Scots ’gainst thousands three,
 Certes, were desperate policy.
 Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
 Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
 Let Musgrave meet fierce Delorainet
 In single fight; and if he gain,
 He gains for us; but if he’s crossed,
 ’Tis but a single warrior lost:
 The rest, retreating as they came,
 Avoid defeat, and death, and shame.”

XXXI.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
 His brother-warden’s sage rebuke;
 And yet his forward step he staid,
 And slow and sullenly obeyed:
 But ne’er again the Border side
 Did these two lords in friendship ride;

* This was the cognizance of the noble house of Howard in all its branches. The crest, or bearing, of a warrior, was often used as a *nomme de guerre*.

† Trial by single combat, so peculiar to the feudal system, was common on the Borders.

And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand ;
His trumpet called, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band ;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight ;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said :—
“ If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain :
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharmed,
In peaceful march like men unarmed,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland.”

XXXIII.

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsayed :
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew
How tardy was the regent's aid ;
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be inclosed with speed
Beneath the castle on a lawn :
They fixed the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn ;
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,

Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, when as the spear
Should shiver in the course :
But he, the jovial Harper, taught*
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say :
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of black Lord Archibald's battle laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brooked not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
Or call his song untrue :
For this when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side, in fight, they stood,
And tuneful hands were stained with blood ;
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragged my master to his tomb ;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him,
Who died at Jedwood Air ?
He died !—his scholars, one by one,
To the cold silent grave are gone ;

* The person here alluded to, is one of our ancient Border minstrels, called Rattling Roaring Willie. Willie chanced to quarrel with one of his own profession, distinguished by the odd name of Sweet Milk, from a place on Rule water so called. They retired to decide the contest with their swords, and Sweet Milk was killed on the spot ; in consequence of which, Willie was taken and executed at Jedburg, bequeathing his name to the beautiful Scotch air, called " Rattling Roaring Willie."

And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused:—the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain;
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvelled the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbor now the hare;
Of manners, long since changed and gone;
Of chiefs, who under their gray stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled;—
In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well pleased; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on poet's ear:
A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

Smiled then, well-pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

CALL it not vain:—they do not err,
Who say, that, when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies ;
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed bard make moan ;
That mountains weep in crystal rill ;
That flowers in tears of balm distil ;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply ;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II.

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn ;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle minstrel's bier :
The phantom knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the fields he heaped with dead
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain :
The chief whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguished lie,
His place, his power, his memory die :

His groans the lonely caverns fill,
 His tears of rage impel the rill;
 All mourn the minstrel's harp unstrung,
 Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III.

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
 The terms of truce were scarcely made,
 When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
 The advancing march of martial powers;
 Thick clouds of dust afar appeared,
 And trampling steeds were faintly heard;
 Bright spears, above the columns dun,
 Glanced momentary to the sun;
 And feudal banners fair displayed
 The ban's that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV.

'Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
 From the fair Middle Marches came;
 The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,*
 Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!
 'Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
 Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburn†
 Their men in battle-order set;
 And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
 That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
 Of Clarence's Plantagenet.‡
 Nor lists, I say, what hundreds more,
 From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
 And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
 Beneath the crest of old Dunbar,
 And Hepburn's mingled banners come,

* The bloody heart was the well-known cognizance of the house of Douglas, assumed from the time of good Lord James, to whose care Robert Bruce committed his heart, to be carried to the Holy Land.

† Sir David Home of Wedderburn, slain in the fatal battle of Flodden, left seven sons who were called the Seven Spears of Wedderburne.

‡ At the battle of Bouge, in France, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, brother to Henry V., was unhorsed by Sir John Swinton of Swinton, who distinguished him by a coronet set with precious stones, which he wore around his helmet.

Down the steep mountain glittering far,
And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"*

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid;
And told them,—how a truce was made,
And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
And how the Ladye prayed them dear,
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.
Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble Lords forgot;
Himself, the hoary Seneschal,
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubbed, more bold in fight;
Nor, when from war and armor free,
More famed for stately courtesy:
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask
How these two hostile armies met!
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand:
They met, and sate them mingled down,

* The Earls of Home were descendants of the Dunbars, ancient Earls of March. The slogan, or war-cry, of this powerful family was, "a Home! a Home!" The Hepburns, a powerful family in East Lothian, were usually in close alliance with the Homes.

Without a threat, without a frown,
 As brothers meet in foreign land :
 The hands, the spear that lately grasped,
 Still in the mailed gauntlet clasped,
 Were interchanged in greeting dear ;
 Visors were raised, and faces shown,
 And many a friend, to friend made known,
 Partook of social cheer.
 Some drove the jolly bowl about ;
 With dice and draughts some chased the day ;
 And some, with many a merry shout,
 In riot, revelry, and rout,
 Pursued the foot-ball play.*

VII.

Yet be it known, had bugles blown,
 Or sign of war been seen ;
 Those bands, so fair together ranged,
 Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
 Had dyed with gore the green :
 The merry shout by Teviot-side
 Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
 And in the groan of death ;
 And whingers,† now in friendship bare,
 The social meal to part and share,
 Had found a bloody sheath.
 'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
 Was not unfrequent, nor held strange,
 In the old Border-day ;‡
 But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
 In peaceful merriment, sunk down
 The sun's declining ray.

VIII.

The blithesome signs of wassel gay
 Decayed not with the dying day ;

* The foot-ball was anciently a very favorite sport all through Scotland, but especially on the Borders.

† A sort of knife, or poniard.

‡ Notwithstanding the constant wars upon the Border, the inhabitants on either side appear to have regarded each other like the outposts of hostile armies, and often carried on something resembling friendly intercourse, even

Soon through the latticed windows tall,
 Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
 Divided square by shafts of stone,
 Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone ;
 Nor less the gilded rafters rang
 With merry harp and beakers' clang ;
 And frequent, on the darkening plain,
 Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
 As bands, their stragglers to regain,
 Give the shrill watchword of their clan ;
 And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
 Douglas' or Dacre's conquering name.

IX.

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
 At length the various clamors died ;
 And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
 No sound but Teviot's rushing tide ;
 Save, when the changing sentinel
 The challenge of his watch could tell ;
 And save, where, through the dark profound,
 The clanging axe and hammer's sound
 Rung from the nether lawn ;
 For many a busy hand toiled there,
 Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
 The lists' dread barriers to prepare,
 Against the morrow's dawn.

X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
 Despite the Dame's reproving eye,
 Nor marked she, as she left her seat,
 Full many a stifled sigh :
 For many a noble warrior strove
 To win the flower of Teviot's love,
 And many a bold ally.—
 With throbbing head and anxious heart,
 All in her lonely bower apart,
 In broken sleep she lay :
 By times, from silken couch she rose ;

In the middle of hostilities, so that the governments of both countries were
 jealous of their cherishing too intimate a connection.

While yet the bannered hosts repose,
She viewed the dawning day:
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI.

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now still as death;—till, stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior passed below;
But when he raised his plumed head—
Blessed Mary! can it be?
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers
With fearless step and free.
She dare not sign, she dare not speak—
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII.

Yet was his hazard small—for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin Page;
This to his lord he did impart
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged, thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he crossed,
For all the vassalage:
But, O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII.

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
 That foul malicious urchin had
 To bring this meeting round ;
 For happy love's a heavenly sight,
 And by a vile malignant sprite
 In such no joy is found :
 And oft I've deemed, perchance he thought
 Their erring passion might have wrought
 Sorrow, and sin, and shame ;
 And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
 And to the gentle Ladye bright,
 Disgrace, and loss of fame.
 But earthly spirit could not tell
 The heart of them that loved so well ;
 True love's the gift which God has given
 To man alone beneath the heaven.
 It is not Fantasy's hot fire,
 Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly ;
 It liveth not in fierce desire,
 With dead desire it doth not die :
 It is the secret sympathy,
 The silver link, the silken tie,
 Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
 In body and in soul can bind.—
 Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
 To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV.

Their warning blast the bugles blew,
 The pipe's shrill port aroused each clan ;
 In haste, the deadly strife to view,
 The trooping warriors eager ran :
 Thick round the lists their lances stood,
 Like blasted pines in Ettrick wood ;
 To Branksome many a look they threw,
 The combatants' approach to view,
 And bandied many a word of boast,
 About the knight each favored most.

XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame ;
 For now arose disputed claim,

Of who should fight for Deloraine,
 'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestane:
 They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
 And frowning brow on brow was bent;
 But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
 Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
 Strong, as it seemed, and free from pain,
 In armor sheathed from top to toe,
 Appeared, and craved the combat due.
 The Dame her charm successful knew,
 And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI.

When for the lists they sought the plain,
 The stately Ladye's silken rein
 Did noble Howard hold;
 Unarmed by her side he walked,
 And much, in courteous phrase, they talked
 Of feats of arms of old.
 Costly his garb, his Flemish ruff
 Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
 With satin slashed, and lined;
 Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
 His cloak was all of Poland fur,
 His hose with silver twined;
 His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
 Hung in a broad and studded belt;
 Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
 Called noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
 Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
 Whose foot-cloth swept the ground;
 White was her wimple, and her veil,
 And her loose locks a chaplet pale
 Of whitest roses bound;
 The lordly Angus, by her side,
 In courtesy to cheer her tried;
 Without his aid, her hand in vain
 Had strove to guide her broidered rein.
 He deemed, she shuddered at the sight
 Of warriors met for mortal fight;

But cause of terror, all unguessed,
 Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
 When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
 The Dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII.

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch,
 An English knight led forth to view;
 Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
 So much he longed to see the fight.
 Within the lists, in knightly pride,
 High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
 Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
 As marshals of the mortal field:
 While to each knight their care assigned
 Like vantage of the sun and wind.
 Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
 In king and queen, and wardens' name,
 That none, while lasts the strife,
 Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
 Aid to a champion to afford,
 On peril of his life;
 And not a breath the silence broke,
 Till thus the alternate heralds spoke:

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

“ Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
 Good knight and true, and freely born,
 Amends from Deloraine to crave,
 For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
 He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
 Is traitor false by Border laws;
 This with his sword he will maintain,
 So help him God, and his good cause!”

XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

“ Here standeth William of Deloraine,
 Good knight and true, of noble strain,
 Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,

Since he bore arms, ne'er soiled his coat;
 And that, so help him God above,
 He will on Musgrave's body prove,
 He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE.

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
 Sound trumpets!"——

LORD HOME.

——;"God defend the right!"
 Then, Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
 When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
 Let loose the martial foes,
 And in mid list, with shield poised high,
 And measured step and wary eye,
 The combatants did close.

XXI.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
 Ye lovely listeners, to hear
 How to the axe the helms did sound,
 And blood poured down from many a wound;
 For desperate was the strife, and long,
 And either warrior fierce and strong.
 But, were each dame a listening knight,
 I well could tell how warriors fight;
 For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
 Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
 Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
 And scorned, amid the reeling strife,
 To yield a step for death or life.

XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
 Has stretched him on the bloody plain;
 He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
 Thence never shalt thou rise again!
 He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
 Undo the visor's barred band,
 Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
 And give him room for life to gasp!—

O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,
 Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
 Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
 And smooth his path from earth to heaven.

XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped;—
 His naked foot was dyed with red,
 As through the lists he ran;
 Unmindful of the shouts on high,
 That hailed the conqueror's victory,
 He raised the dying man;
 Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
 As o'er him he kneeled down in prayer;
 And still the crucifix on high
 He holds before his darkening eye;
 And still he bends an anxious ear,
 His faltering penitence to hear;—
 Still props him from the bloody sod,
 Still, even when soul and body part,
 Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
 And bids him trust in God!
 Unheard he prays;—the death pang's o'er
 Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV.

As if exhausted in the fight,
 Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
 The silent victor stands;
 His beaver did he not unclasp,
 Marked not the shouts, felt not the grasp
 Of gratulating hands.
 When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
 Mingled with seeming terror, rise
 Among the Scottish bands;
 And all, amid the thronged array,
 In panic haste gave open way
 To a half-naked ghastly man,
 Who downward from the castle ran;
 He crossed the barriers at a bound,
 And wild and haggard looked around,
 As dizzy, and in pain;
 And all, upon the armed ground,

Knew William of Deloraine!
 Each ladye sprung from seat with speed;
 Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
 "And who art thou," they cried,
 "Who hast this battle fought and won?"
 His plumed helm was soon undone—
 "Cranstoun of Teviotside!
 For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
 And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

Full oft the rescued boy she kissed,
 And often pressed him to her breast;
 For, under all her dauntless show,
 Her heart had throbb'd at every blow;
 Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she greet,
 Though low he kneel'd at her feet.—
 Me lists not tell what words were made,
 What Douglas, Home, and Howard said—
 For Howard was a generous foe—
 And how the clan united pray'd,
 The Ladye would the feud forego,
 And deign to bless the nuptial hour
 Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI.

She looked to river, looked to hill,
 Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
 Then broke her silence stern and still,—
 "Not you, but Fate, has vanquished me;
 Their influence kindly stars may shower
 On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
 For pride is quelled, and love is free."
 She took fair Margaret by the hand,
 Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand,
 That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she.
 "As I am true to thee and thine,
 Do thou be true to me and mine!
 This clasp of love our bond shall be;
 For this is your betrothing day,
 And all these noble lords shall stay,
 To grace it with their company."

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,
 Much of the story she did gain :
 How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
 And of his Page, and of the Book,
 Which from the wounded knight he took ;
 And how he sought her castle high,
 That morn, by help of gramarye ;
 How, in Sir William's armor dight,
 Stolen by his Page, while slept the knight,
 He took on him the single fight.
 But half his tale he left unsaid,
 And lingered till he joined the maid.—
 Cared not the Ladye to betray
 Her mystic arts in view of day ;
 But well she thought, ere midnight came,
 Of that strange Page the pride to tame,
 From his foul hands the Book to save,
 And send it back to Michael's grave.—
 Needs not to tell each tender word
 'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord ;
 Nor how she told of former woes,
 And how her bosom fell and rose,
 While he and Musgrave bandied blows—
 Needs not these lovers' joys to tell ;
 One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII.

William of Deloraine, some chance
 Had wakened from his deathlike trance ;
 And taught that, in the listed plain,
 Another, in his arms and shield,
 Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
 Under the name of Deloraine.
 Hence, to the field, unarmed, he ran,
 And hence his presence scared the clan,
 Who held him for some fleeting wraith,*
 And not a man of blood and breath.
 Not much this new ally he loved,
 Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
 He greeted him right heartilie :

* The spectral apparition of a living person.

He would not waken old debate,
 For he was void of rancorous hate,
 Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
 In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
 Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
 Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
 He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
 Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:
 And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
 When on dead Musgrave he looked down;
 Grief darkened on his rugged brow,
 Though half disguised with a frown;
 And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
 His foeman's epitaph he made.

XXIX.

“Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!
 I ween, my deadly enemy;
 For if I slew thy brother dear,
 Thou slewest a sister's son to me;
 And when I lay in dungeon dark,
 Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
 Till ransomed for a thousand mark,
 Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
 And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
 And thou wert now alive, as I,
 No mortal man should us divide,
 Till one, or both of us, did die:
 Yet, rest thee God! for well I know,
 I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
 In all the northern counties here,
 Whose word is, Snaffle, spur, and spear,*
 Thou wert the best to follow gear.
 'Twas pleasure, as we looked behind,
 To see how thou the chace couldst wind,
 Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
 And with the bugle rouse the fray!†

* The lands, that over Ouse to Berwick forth do bear,
 Have for their blazon had, the snaffle, spur, and spear.

Polly-albion, Song xxxiii.

† The pursuit of Border marauders was followed by the injured party and his friends with blood-hounds and bugle-horn, and was called the *hot-trod*.

I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."

xxx.

So mourned he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield;
On levelled lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore:
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:
Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trod;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale, to Leven's shore;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hushed the song,
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave.
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he who touched the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous southern land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

He was entitled, if his dog could trace the scent, to follow the invaders into the opposite kingdom; a privilege which often occasioned bloodshed.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
 His only friend, his harp, was dear,
 Liked not to hear it ranked so high
 Above his flowing poesy ;
 Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
 Misprized the land he loved so dear ;
 High was the sound, as thus again
 The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.



CANTO SIXTH.

I.

BREATHES there the man with soul so dead,
 Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land !
 Whose héart hath ne'er within him burned,
 As home his footsteps he hath turned,

From wandering on a foreign strand !
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well.
 For him no Minstrel raptures swell ;
 High though his titles, proud his name,
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim ;
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
 The wretch, concentered all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And, doubly dying, shall go down
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
 Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

II.

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
 Meet nurse for a poetic child !
 Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
 Land of the mountain and the flood,
 Land of my sires! what mortal hand
 Can e'er untie the filial band,
 That knits me to thy rugged strand !
 Still, as I view each well-known scene,

Think what is now, and what hath been,
 Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
 Sole friends thy woods and streams were left,
 And thus I love them better still,
 Even in extremity of ill.

By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
 Though none should guide my feeble way ;
 Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
 Although it chill my withered cheek ;
 Still lay my head by Teviot stone,
 Though there, forgotten and alone,
 The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III.

Not scorned like me! to Branksome Hall
 The Minstrels came, at festive call ;
 Trooping they came, from near and far,
 The jovial priests of mirth and war ;
 Alike for feast and fight prepared,
 Battle and banquet both they shared.
 Of late, before each martial clan,
 They blew their death-note in the van,
 But now, for every merry mate,
 Rose the portcullis' iron grate ;
 They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
 They dance, they revel, and they sing,
 Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV.

Me lists not at this tide declare
 The splendor of a spousal rite,
 How mustered in the chapel fair
 Both maid and matron, squire and knight ;
 Me lists not tell of owches rare,
 Of mantles green, and braided hair,
 And kirtles furred with miniver ;
 What plumage waved the altar round,
 How spurs, and ringing chainlets, sound :
 And hard it were for bard to speak
 The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek ;
 That lovely hue, which comes and flies,
 As awe and shame alternate rise !

V.

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
 Chapel or altar came not nigh;
 Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
 So much she feared each holy place.
 False slanders these:—I trust right well,
 She wrought not by forbidden spell;*
 For mighty words and signs have power
 O'er sprites in planetary hour:
 Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
 Who tamper with such dangerous art.

But this for faithful truth I say:

The Ladye by the altar stood,
 Of sable velvet her array,
 And on her head a crimson hood,
 With pearls embroidered and entwined,
 Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
 A merlin sat upon her wrist,
 Held by a leash of silken twist.†

VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon:
 'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
 And in the lofty arched hall
 Was spread the gorgeous festival.
 Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
 Marshalled the rank of every guest;
 Pages, with ready blade, were there,
 The mighty meal to carve and share:
 O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
 And princely peacock's gilded train,
 And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave,
 And cygnet from St. Mary's wave;‡

* Popular belief made a favorable distinction betwixt magicians, and necromancers or wizards; the former were supposed to command the evil spirits, and the latter to serve, or at least to be in league with those enemies of mankind.

† A merlin, or sparrow-hawk, was usually carried by ladies of rank, as a falcon was, in time of peace, by a knight or baron.

‡ The peacock was considered, during chivalrous times, a dish of peculiar solemnity. It was introduced on days of grand festival, and was the signal for the adventurous knights to vow some perilous deed "before the peacock and the ladies." The boar's head was also a dish of feudal splen-

O'er ptarmigan and venison,
 The priest had spoke his benison.
 Then rose the riot and the din,
 Above, beneath, without, within!
 For from the lofty balcony,
 Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery;
 Their clanging bows old warriors quaffed,
 Loudly they spoke, and loudly laughed;
 Whispered young knights, in tone more mild,
 To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
 The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
 The clamor joined with whistling scream,
 And flapped their wings, and shook their bells,
 In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
 Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
 From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
 Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
 And all is mirth and revelry. /

VII.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
 No opportunity of ill,
 Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
 To rouse debate and jealousy;
 Till Conrad, lord of Wolfenstein,
 By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
 And now in humor highly crossed,
 About some steeds his band had lost,
 High words to words succeeding still,
 Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill;
 A hot and hardy Rutherford,
 Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-Sword.*
 He took it on the Page's 'saye,
 Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
 Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
 The kindling discord to compose:

dor. In Scotland it was sometimes surrounded with little banners, displaying the colors of the baron at whose board it was served. St. Mary's Lake, at the head of the river Yarrow, is often the resort of flights of wild swans.

* The Rutherfords of Hunthill were an ancient race of Border lairds. Dickon Draw-the-Sword was the son to the old warrior, called in tradition the Cock of Hunthill.

Stern Rutherford right little said,
 But bit his glove, and shook his head.—*
 A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
 Stout Conrad, cold, and drenched in blood,
 His bosom gored with many a wound,
 Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;
 Unknown the manner of his death,
 Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
 But ever from that time, 'twas said
 That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

The Dwarf, who feared his master's eye
 Might his foul treachery espie,
 Now sought the castle buttery,
 Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
 Revelled as merrily and well
 As those that sat in lordly selle.
 Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
 The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes; †
 And he, as by his breeding bound,
 To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
 To quit them, on the English side,
 Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
 "A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"
 At every pledge, from vat and pail,
 Foamed forth, in floods, the nut-brown ale:
 While shout the riders every one,
 Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their clan,
 Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
 When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en. ‡

IX.

The wily Page, with vengeful thought,
 Remembered him of Tinlinn's yew,

* To bite the thumb, or the glove, seems to have been considered, upon the Border, as a pledge of mortal revenge.

† The person bearing this redoubtable *nomme de guerre*, was an Elliot, and resided at Thorleshope, in Liddesdale. He occurs in the list of Border riders, in 1597.

‡ The old Scottish tradition is, that the founder of the Buccleuch family was a Galwegian exile, who ran down and secured a buck, which had thrown out Kenneth Macalpine and all his nobles in the chase.

And swore, it should be dearly bought,
 That ever he the arrow drew.
 First, he the yeoman did molest,
 With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
 Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
 And how Hob Armstrong cheered his wife.
 Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
 At unawares he wrought him harm;
 From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
 Dashed from his lips his can of beer,
 Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
 With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
 The venom'd wound, and festering joint,
 Long after rued that bodkin's point.
 The startled yeoman swore and spurned,
 And board and flagons overturned;
 Riot and clamor wild began;
 Back to the hall the urchin ran;
 Took in a darkling nook his post,
 And grinned and muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X.

By this, the Dame, lest further fray
 Should mar the concord of the day,
 Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
 And first stept forth old Albert Græme,
 The Minstrel of that ancient name:
 Was none who struck the harp so well,
 Within the land Debateable;
 Well friended too, his hardy kin,
 Whoever lost, were sure to win;
 They sought the beeves, that made their broth,
 In Scotland and in England both.
 In homely guise, as nature bade,
 His simple song the Borderer said.

XI.

ALBERT GRÆME.

It was an English ladye bright,
 (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
 And she would marry a Scottish knight,
 For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall,
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lee,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII.

That wine she had not tasted well,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;)
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all.

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;—
So perish all, would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And died for her sake in Palestine,
So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
Pray for their souls, who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII.

As ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port;
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
Renowned in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivalled long,
Fitztraver of the silver song.
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—

Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?
 His was the hero's soul of fire,
 And his the bard's immortal name,
 And his was love, exalted high
 By all the glow of chivalry.*

XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,
 And oft, within some olive grove,
 When evening came, with twinkling star,
 They sung of Surrey's absent love.
 His step the Italian peasant staid,
 And deemed, that spirits from on high,
 Round where some hermit saint was laid,
 Were breathing heavenly melody;
 So sweet did heart and voice combine
 To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV.

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
 The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
 When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
 Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
 Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
 His harp called wrath and vengeance down.
 He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
 Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
 And, faithful to his patron's name,
 With Howard still Fitztraver came;
 Lord William's foremost favorite he.
 And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

FITZTRAVER.

'Twas All-Souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat high,
 He heard the midnight-bell with anxious start,

* Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, the most accomplished cavalier of his time, was beheaded on Towerhill in 1546; a victim to the mean jealousy of Henry VIII. It is said that in his travels, Cornelius Agrippa, the celebrated alchemist, showed him, in a looking-glass, the lovely Geraldine, to whose service he had devoted his pen and his sword. The vision represented her as indisposed, and reclined upon a couch, reading her lover's verses by the light of a waxen taper

Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roared the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

XVII.

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might,
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright:
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watch-light, by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror, huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom strayed her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose, she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine
Some strain, that seemed her inmost soul to find:—
That favored strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the Ladye Geraldine.

XX.

Slow rolled the clouds upon the lovely form,
 And swept the goodly vision all away—
 So royal envy rolled the murky storm
 O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
 Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
 On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
 The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
 The gory bridal bed, the plundered shrine,
 The murdered Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine.

XXI.

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong
 Applauses of Fitztraver's song:
 These hated Henry's name as death,
 And those still held the ancient faith.—
 Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
 Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair;
 St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
 Had with that Lord to battle come.
 Harold was born where restless seas
 Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
 Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway,
 O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
 Still nods their palace to its fall,
 Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—*
 Thence oft he marked fierce Pentland rave,
 As if grim Odin rode her wave;
 And watched, the whilst, with visage pale,
 And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
 For all of wonderful and wild
 Had rapture for the lonely child.

* The St. Clairs are of Norman extraction, who, settling in Scotland during the reign of Malcolm Ceanmore, obtained large grants of land in Mid-Lothian. These domains were increased by the liberality of succeeding monarchs to the descendants of the family, and comprehended the baronies of Rosline, Pentland, Cowsland, Cardaine, and several others. In 1379 the chief of the family was created Earl of Orkney in right of his mother, the daughter of the last Earl, by Haco, King of Norway, which title was recognized by the Kings of Scotland and remained with his successors until it was annexed to the Crown, in 1471, by act of parliament. The castle of Kirkwall was built by the St. Clairs, and in exchange for the earldom of Orkney the castle and domains of Ravenscraig, or Ravensheuch, were conferred on William Saintclair Earl of Caithness.

XXII.

And much of wild and wonderful,
 In these rude isles, might fancy cull ;
 For thither came, in times afar,
 Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
 The Norsemen, trained to spoil and blood,
 Skilled to prepare the raven's food ;
 Kings of the main their leaders brave,
 Their barks the dragons of the wave.*
 And there, in many a stormy vale,
 The Seald had told his wondrous tale ;
 And many a Runic column high
 Had witnessed grim idolatry.
 And thus had Harold, in his youth,
 Learned many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,
 Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curled,
 Whose monstrous circle girds the world ;
 Of those dread Maids, whose hideous yell
 Maddens the battle's bloody swell ; †
 Of chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
 By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
 Ransacked the graves of warriors old,
 Their falchions wrenched from corpses' hold,
 Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
 And bade the dead arise to arms ! ‡
 With war and wonder all on flame,
 To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
 Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
 He learned a milder minstrelsy ;
 Yet something of the Northern spell
 Mixed with the softer numbers well.

* The chiefs of the *Vikings* or Scandinavian pirates, assumed the title of *Siekonungr*, or Sea-kings. Ships, in the inflated language of the Sea ds, are often termed the serpents of the ocean.

† The *jormungandr*, or Snake of the Ocean, whose folds surround the earth, is one of the wildest fictions of the old northern mythology. The dread Maids were the *Valkyriur*, or Selectors of the Slain, dispatched by Odin from Valhala, to choose those who were to die, and to distribute the contest. They are well known to the English reader, as Gray's Fatal Sisters.

‡ The northern warriors were usually entombed with their arms, and their other treasures. The ghosts of these warriors were not wont tamely to suffer their tombs to be plundered ; and hence the mortal heroes had an additional temptation to attempt such adventures ; for they held nothing more worthy of their valor than to encounter supernatural beings.

XXIII.

HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
 No haughty feat of arms I tell:
 Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
 That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.*

—“Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
 And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
 Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,†
 Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

“The blackening wave is edged with white;
 To inch‡ and rock the sea-mews fly;
 The fishers have heard the Water Sprite,
 Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

“Last night the gifted seer did view
 A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
 Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch:
 Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?”

“’Tis not because Lord Lindesay’s heir
 To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
 But that my Ladye-mother there
 Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

“’Tis not because the ring they ride,
 And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
 But that my sire the wine will chide,
 If ’tis not filled by Rosabelle.”

XXIV.

✕ O’er Roslin all that dreary night
 A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
 ’Twas broader than the watch-fire light,
 And redder than the bright moonbeam.

* This was a family name in the house of St. Clair. Henry St. Clair, the second of the line, married Rosabelle, fourth daughter of the Earl of Strath-erne.

† A large and strong castle, now ruinous, situated betwixt Kirkaldy and Dysart, on a steep crag, washed by the Firth of Forth.

‡ *Inch*, Isle.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
 It ruddied all the copse-wood glen ;
 'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
 And seen from caverned Hawthornden.

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud,
 Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie ;
 Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
 Sheathed in his iron panoply.*

Seemed all on fire within, around,
 Deep sacristy and altar's pale ;
 Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
 And glimmered all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
 Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
 So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
 The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
 Lie buried within that proud chapelle ;
 Each one the holy vault doth hold—
 But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle.

And each St. Clair was buried there,
 With candle, with book, and with knell ;
 But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
 The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
 Scarce marked the guests the darkened hall,
 Though, long before the sinking day,
 A wondrous shade involved them all :
 It was not eddying mist or fog,
 Drained by the sun from fen or bog ;
 Of no eclipse had sages told ;
 And yet, as it came on apace,

* The beautiful chapel of Roslin is still in tolerable preservation. It was founded in 1446, by William St. Clair, Prince of Orkney, &c., &c., who built the castle of Roslin, where he resided in princely splendor. The chapel is said to appear on fire previous to the death of any of his descendants. The Barons of Roslin were buried in armor in a vault beneath the chapel floor.

Each one could scarce his neighbor's face,
 Could scarce his own stretched hand, behold.
 A secret horror checked the feast,
 And chilled the soul of every guest ;
 Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
 She knew some evil on the blast ;
 The elvish Page fell to the ground,
 And, shuddering, muttered, "Found! found! found!"

XXVI.

Then sudden through the darkened air
 A flash of lightning came ;
 So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
 The castle seemed on flame ;
 Glanced every rafter of the hall,
 Glanced every shield upon the wall ;
 Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
 Were instant seen, and instant gone ;
 Full through the guests' bedazzled band
 Resistless flashed the levin-brand,
 And filled the hall with smouldering smoke,
 As on the elvish Page it broke.
 It broke, with thunder long and loud,
 Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud,
 From sea to sea the larum rung ;
 On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
 To arms the startled warders sprung.
 When ended was the dreadful roar,
 The elvish Dwarf was seen no more !

XXVII.

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
 Some saw a sight not seen by all ;
 That dreadful voice was heard by some,
 Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN, COME!"
 And on the spot where burst the brand,
 Just where the Page had flung him down,
 Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
 And some the waving of a gown.
 The guests in silence prayed and shook,
 And terror dimmed each lofty look :
 But none of all the astonished train
 Was so dismayed as Deloraine ;

His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
 'Twas feared his mind would ne'er return;
 For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
 Like him, of whom the story ran,
 Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.*
 At length, by fits, he darkly told,
 With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
 That he had seen right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapped around,
With a wrought Spanish baldrick bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea;
 And knew—but how, it mattered not—
 It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVIII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
 All trembling, heard the wondrous tale;
 No sound was made, no word was spoke,
 Till noble Angus silence broke;
 And he a solemn sacred plight
 Did to St. Bryde of Douglas make,†
 That he a pilgrimage would take
 To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
 Of Michael's restless sprite.
 Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
 To some blessed saint his prayers addressed—
 Some to St. Modan made their vows,
 Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,
 Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
 Some to our Lady of the Isle;
 Each did his patron witness make,
 That he such pilgrimage would take.
 And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
 All for the weal of Michael's soul.
 While vows were ta'en, and prayers were prayed,
 'Tis said the noble Dame, dismayed,
 Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

* Called in the Manx language tho *Mauthe Doog*. The story is, that a fool-hardy person who would question this phantom, received such a shock from the interview, that he remained speechless till his death, which happened only three days after.

† This was a favorite saint of the house of Douglas, and of the Earl of Angus in particular.

XXIX.

Naught of the bridal will I tell,
 Which after in short space befell;
 Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
 Blessed Teviot's Flower and Cranstoun's heir;
 After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
 To wake the note of mirth again;
 More meet it were to mark the day
 Of penitence and prayer divine,
 When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
 Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXX.

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
 And arms enfolded on his breast,
 Did every pilgrim go;
 The standers-by might here uneath,
 Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
 Through all the lengthened row:
 No lordly look, no martial stride,
 Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
 Forgotten their renown;
 Silent and slow, like ghosts, they glide
 To the high altar's hallowed side,
 And there they kneeled them down;
 Above the suppliant chieftains wave
 The banners of departed brave;
 Beneath the lettered stones were laid
 The ashes of their fathers dead;
 From many a garnished niche around,
 Stern saints, and tortured martyrs, frowned.

XXXI.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
 With sable cowl and scapular,
 And snow-white stoles, in order due,
 The holy Fathers, two and two,
 In long procession came;
 Taper, and host, and book they bare,
 And holy banner, flourished fair
 With the Redeemer's name:
 Above the prostrate pilgrim band

The mitred Abbot stretched his hand,
 And blessed them as they kneeled:
 With holy cross he signed them all,
 And prayed they might be sage in hall,
 And fortunate in field.
 Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
 And solemn requiem for the dead;
 And bells tolled out their mighty peal,
 For the departed spirit's weal;
 And ever in the office close
 The hymn of intercession rose;
 And far the echoing aisles prolong
 The awful burden of the song,—
 DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
 SOLVET SECLUM IN FAVILLA;
 While the pealing organ rung;
 Were it meet with sacred strain
 To close my lay, so light and vain,
 Thus the holy Fathers sung.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
 When heaven and earth shall pass away,
 What power shall be the sinner's stay?
 How shall he meet that dreadful day?

When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
 The flaming heavens together roll;
 When louder yet, and yet more dread,
 Swells the high trump that wakes the dead;

O! on that day, that wrathful day,
 When man to judgment wakes from clay,
 Be *Τῆου* the trembling sinner's stay,
 Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

HUSHED is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
 And did he wander forth alone?
 Alone, in indigence and age,
 To linger out his pilgrimage?
 No—close beneath proud Newark's tower,
 Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
 A simple hut; but there was seen

The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There sheltered wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begged before.
So passed the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark-heath;
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

MARMION,
A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

A POEM, IN SIX CANTOS.

"ALAS! THAT SCOTTISH MAID SHOULD SING
THE COMBAT WHERE HER LOVER FELL!
THAT SCOTTISH BAED SHOULD WAKE THE STRING,
THE TRIUMPH OF OUR FOES TO TELL!"—VEYDEN.

TO
THE RIGHT HONORABLE
HENRY, LORD MONTAGUE,
ETC., ETC., ETC.,

THIS ROMANCE IS INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It is hardly to be expected, that an Author whom the public has honored with some degree of applause should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet the Author of *MÆRMION* must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its success, since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation which his first Poem may have procured him. The present Story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprise his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the age in which it is laid. Any historical narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic Tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of *THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL*, that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the public.

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 4th September, 1513.

M A R M I O N .

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

To WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, Esq.

Ashestiel, Eltrick Forest.

NOVEMBER's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear :
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through :
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed ;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam ;
Away hath passed the heather-bell,
That bloomed so rich on Needpath-fell ;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yare.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To sheltered dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,

And yet a watery sunbeam shines :
 In meek despondency they eye
 The withered sward and wintry sky,
 And far beneath their summer hill,
 Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill :
 The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
 And wraps him closer from the cold ;
 His dogs no merry circles wheel,
 But, shivering, follow at his heel ;
 A cowering glance they often cast,
 As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
 As best befits the mountain child,
 Feel the sad influence of the hour,
 And wail the daisy's vanished flower ;
 Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
 And anxious ask,—Will spring return,
 And birds and lambs again be gay,
 And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray ?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower
 Again shall paint your summer bower ;
 Again the hawthorn shall supply
 The garlands you delight to tie ;
 The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
 The wild birds carol to the round,
 And while you frolic light as they,
 Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things
 New life revolving summer brings ;
 The genial call dead Nature hears,
 And in her glory reappears.
 But O! my country's wintry state
 What second spring shall renovate ?
 What powerful call shall bid arise
 The buried warlike, and the wise ;
 The mind, that thought for Britain's weal
 The hand, that grasped the victor steel ?
 The vernal sun new life bestows
 Even on the meanest flower that blows ;
 But vainly, vainly, may he shine,
 Where Glory weeps o'er NELSON'S shrine ;

And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallowed tomb!

Deep grav'd in every British heart,
O never let those names depart!
Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,
Who victor died on Gadite wave;
To him, as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given;
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Rolled, blazed, destroyed,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perished worth,
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And lanced that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia,* Trafalgar;
Who, born to guide such high emprise,
For Britain's weal was early wise;
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave;
His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strained at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gained,
The pride, he would not crush, restrained,
Showed their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's
laws.

Hadst thou but lived, though stripped of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand;
By thee, as by the beacon-light,
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propped the tottering throne.
Now is the stately column broke,

* Copenhagen.

The beacon-light is quenched in smoke,
 The trumpet's silver sound is still,
 The warder silent on the hill!

Oh, think, how to his latest day,
 When Death, just hovering, claimed his prey,
 With Palinure's unaltered mood,
 Firm at his dangerous post he stood;
 Each call for needful rest repelled,
 With dying hand the rudder held,
 Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
 The steerage of the realm gave way!
 Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
 One unpolluted church remains,
 Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
 The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
 But still, upon the hallowed day,
 Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
 While faith and civil peace are dear,
 Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
 He, who preserved them, PITT, lies here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
 Because his Rival slumbers nigh;
 Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
 Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
 For talents mourn, untimely lost,
 When best employed, and wanted most;
 Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
 And wit that loved to play, not wound;
 And all the reasoning powers divine,
 To penetrate, resolve, combine;
 And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—
 They sleep with him who sleeps below;
 And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
 From error him who owns this grave,
 Be every harsher thought suppressed,
 And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
 Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
 Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
 Of those who fought, and spokè, and sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
 The distant notes of holy song,

As if some angel spoke agen,
"All peace on earth, good-will to men ;"
If ever from an English heart,
O *here* let prejudice depart,
And partial feeling cast aside,
Record, that Fox a Briton died!
When Europe crouched to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave
Was bartered by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonor's peace he spurned,
The sullied olive-branch returned,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nailed her colors to the mast.
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
A portion in this honored grave ;
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endowed,
How high they soared above the crowd!
Theirs was no common party race,
Jostling by dark intrigue for place ;
Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar ;
Beneath each banner proud to stand,
Looked up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were known
The names of PITT and FOX alone.
Spells of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.
These spells are spent, and, spent with these,
The wine of life is on the lees.
Genius, and taste, and talent gone,
Forever tombed beneath the stone,
Where,—taming thought to human pride!—
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon FOX's grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier ;
O'er PITT's the mournful requiem sound,
And FOX's shall the notes rebound.

The solemn echo seems to cry,—
 “Here let their discord with them die:
 Speak not for those a separate doom,
 Whom Fate made brothers in the tomb;
 But search the land of living men,
 Where wilt thou find their like agen?”

Rest, ardent Spirits! till the cries
 Of dying nature bid you rise;
 Not even your Britain's groans can pierce
 The leaden silence of your hearse:
 Then, O how impotent and vain
 This grateful tributary strain!
 Though not unmarked from northern clime,
 Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme:
 His Gothic harp has o'er you rung; [has sung.
 The bard you deigned to praise, your deathless names

Stay yet, illusion, stay awhile,
 My wildered fancy still beguile!
 From this high theme how can I part,
 Ere half unloaded is my heart!
 For all the tears e'er sorrow drew,
 And all the raptures fancy knew,
 And all the keener rush of blood,
 That throbs through bard in bard-like mood,
 Were here a tribute mean and low,
 Though all their mingled streams could flow—
 Woe, wonder, and sensation high,
 In one spring-tide of ecstasy.—
 It will not be—it may not last—
 The vision of enchantment's past:
 Like frost-work in the morning ray,
 The fancied fabric melts away;
 Each Gothic arch, memorial stone,
 And long, dim, lofty aisle are gone,
 And, lingering last, deception dear,
 The choir's high sounds die on my ear.
 Now slow return the lonely down,
 The silent pastures, bleak and brown,
 The farm begirt with copse-wood wild,
 The gambols of each frolic child,
 Mixing their shrill cries with the tone
 Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run,
Thus Nature disciplines her son :
Meeter, she says, for me to stray,
And waste the solitary day,
In plucking from yon fen the reed,
And watching it float down the Tweed ;
Or idly list the shrilling lay
With which the milkmaid cheers her way,
Marking its cadence rise and fall,
As from the field, beneath her pail,
She trips it down the uneven dale :
Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
The ancient shepherd's tale to learn,
Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
Lest his old legends tire the ear
Of one, who, in his simple mind,
May boast of book-learned taste refined.

But thou, my friend, canst fitly tell,
(For few have read romance so well,)
How still the legendary lay
O'er poet's bosom holds its sway ;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain ;
And how our hearts at doughty deeds,
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
Still throb for fear and pity's sake ;
As when the Champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied corse ;
Or when, Dame Ganore's grace to move,
(Alas ! that lawless was their love,)
He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights ; or when,
A sinful man, and unconfessed,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.*

* These allusions refer to the adventures of Sir Launcelot of the Lake, so agreeably told in the old romance of the Morte Arthur.

The mightiest chiefs of British song
 Scorned not such legends to prolong:
 They gleam through Spenser's elfin dream,
 And mix in Milton's heavenly theme;
 And Dryden, in immortal strain,
 Had raised the Table Round again,*
 But that a ribald king and court
 Bade him toil on, to make them sport;
 Demanded for their niggard pay,
 Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
 Licentious satire, song, and play;
 The world defrauded of the high design,
 Profaned the God-given strength, and marred the
 lofty line.

Warmed by such names, well may we then,
 Though dwindled sons of little men,
 Essay to break a feeble lance
 In the fair fields of old romance;
 Or seek the moated castle's cell,
 Where long through talisman and spell,
 While tyrants ruled, and damsels wept,
 Thy Genius, Chivalry, hath slept:
 There sound the harpings of the North,
 Till he awake and sally forth,
 On venturous quest to prick again,
 In all his arms, with all his train,
 Shield, lance, and brand, and plume, and scarf,
 Fay, giant, dragon, squire, and dwarf,
 And wizard, with his wand of might,
 And errant maid on palfrey white.
 Around the Genius weave their spells,
 Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells;
 Mystery, half veiled and half revealed;
 And Honor, with his spotless shield;
 Attention, with fixed eye; and Fear,
 That loves the tale she shrinks to hear;

* Dryden had projected an epic poem, the subject of which was to have been the exploits of King Arthur; and had he been enabled to accomplish such a work, it would have been undoubtedly a glorious monument of English genius, as well as record of English heroism. But the ingratitude of Charles II., and his courtiers, by whom he was abandoned to poverty and neglect, obliged him to labor for his present wars, and the scheme was unfortunately abandoned.

And gentle Courtesy; and Faith,
 Unchanged by sufferings, time, or death;
 And Valor, lion-mettled lord,
 Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement shown,
 A worthy meed may thus be won;
 Ytene's* oaks—beneath whose shade
 Their theme the merry minstrels made,
 Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold,†
 And that Red King,‡ who, while of old
 Through Boldrewood the chase he led.
 By his loved huntsman's arrow bled—
 Ytene's oaks have heard again
 Renewed such legendary strain;
 For thou hast sung, how He of Gaul,
 That Amadis so famed in hall,
 For Oriana, foiled in fight
 The Necromancer's felon might;
 And well in modern verse hast wove
 Partenopex's mystic love:
 Hear then, attentive to my lay,
 A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

CANTO FIRST.

The Castle.

I.

DAY set on Norham's castled steep,
 And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,‡
 And Cheviot's mountains lone:

* The new forest in Hampshire, anciently so called.

† Ascapart was a huge giant, and Bevis of Southampton a gallant knight who both figure in the early English romances.

‡ William Rufus.

§ The ruinous castle of Norham is situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, about six miles above Berwick. The extent of its ruins, as well as its historical importance, shows it to have been a place of magnificence, as well as strength.

The battled towers, the donjon keep,*
 The loop-hole grates where captives weep,
 The flanking walls that round it sweep,
 In yellow lustre shone.
 The warriors on the turrets high,
 Moving athwart the evening sky,
 Seemed forms of giant height :
 Their armor, as it caught the rays,
 Flashed back again the western blaze,
 In lines of dazzling light.

II.

St. George's banner, broad and gay,
 Now faded, as the fading ray
 Less bright, and less, was flung ;
 The evening gale had scarce the power
 To wave it on the donjon tower,
 So heavily it hung.
 The scouts had parted on their search,
 The castle gates were barred ;
 Above the gloomy portal arch,
 Timing his footsteps to a march,
 The warder kept his guard,
 Low humming, as he paced along,
 Some ancient Border gathering song.

III.

A distant trampling sound he hears ;
 He looks abroad, and soon appears,
 O'er Horncliff-hill, a plump† of spears,
 Beneath a pennon gay ;
 A horseman, darting from the crowd,

* The *donjon* was the strongest part of a feudal castle; a high, square tower, with walls of tremendous thickness, situated in the centre of the other buildings, from which, however, it was usually detached. It contained the great hall, and principal rooms of state for solemn occasions, and also the prison of the fortress; from which last circumstance we derive the modern and restricted use of the word *dungeon*.

† This word properly applies to a flight of water-fowl, but is applied, by analogy, to a body of horse.

“There is a Knight of the North Country,
 Which leads a lusty *plump* of spears.”

Flodden Field.

Like lightning from a summer cloud,
 Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
 Before the dark array.
 Beneath the sable palisade,
 That closed the castle barricade,
 His bugle-horn he blew ;
 The warder hasted from the wall,
 And warned the Captain in the hall,
 For well the blast he knew :
 And joyfully that Knight did call,
 To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

IV.

“Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
 Bring pasties of the doe,
 And quickly make the entrance free,
 And bid my heralds ready be,
 And every minstrel sound his glee,
 And all our trumpets blow :
 And, from the platform, spare ye not
 To fire a noble salvo-shot :
 Lord Marmion waits below.”
 Then to the Castle’s lower ward
 Sped forty yeomen tall,
 The iron-studded gates unbarred,
 Raised the porteullis’ ponderous guard,
 The lofty palisade unsparred,
 And let the drawbridge fall.

V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
 Proudly his red-roan charger trod,
 His helm hung at the saddle-bow ;
 Well, by his visage, you might know
 He was a stalworth knight and keen,
 And had in many a battle been ;
 The scar on his brown cheek revealed
 A token true of Bosworth field ;
 His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,
 Showed spirit proud, and prompt to ire ;
 Yet lines of thought upon his cheek,
 Did deep design and counsel speak.
 His forehead, by his casque worn bare,

His thick moustache and curly hair,
 Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
 But more through toil than age ;
 His square-turned joints, and strength of limb,
 Showed him no carpet knight so trim,
 But, in close fight, a champion grim,
 In camps a leader sage.

VI.

Well was he armed from head to heel,
 In mail, and plate, of Milan steel ;*
 But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
 Was all with burnished gold embossed ;
 Amid the plumage of the crest,
 A falcon hovered on her nest,
 With wings outspread, and forward breast ;
 E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
 Soared sable in an azure field :
 The golden legend bore aright,
 "WHO CHECKS AT ME, TO DEATH IS DIGHT."
 Blue was the charger's brodered rein ;
 Blue ribbons decked his arching mane ;
 The knightly housing's ample fold
 Was velvet blue, and trapped with gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
 Of noble name, and knightly sires ;
 They burned the gilded spurs to claim ;
 For well could each a war-horse tame,
 Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
 And lightly bear the ring away ;
 Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
 Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
 And frame love ditties passing rare,
 And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII.

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
 With halberd, bill, and battle-axe :

* The artists of Milan were famous in the middle ages for their skill in armor.

They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong
And led his sumpter mules along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.
The last, and trustiest of the four,
On high his forky pennon bore ;
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
Fluttered the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazoned sable, as before,
The towering falcon seemed to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
With falcons broidered on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest.
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood ;
Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft could send ;
Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
And at their belts their quivers rung.
Their dusty palfreys, and array,
Showed they had marched a weary way.

IX.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly armed, and ordered how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the castle-yard ;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared :
Entered the train, and such a clang,
As then through all his turrets rang,
Old Norham never heard.

X.

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
The trumpets flourished brave,
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
And thundering welcome gave.

A blithe salute, in martial sort,
 The minstrels well might sound,
 For, as Lord Marmion crossed the court,
 He scattered angels round.
 "Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
 Stout heart, and open hand!
 Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
 Thou flower of English land!"—

XI.

Two pursuivants, whom tabarts deck,
 With silver scutcheon round their neck,
 Stood on the steps of stone,
 By which you reach the donjon gate,
 And there, with herald pomp and state,
 They hailed Lord Marmion:
 They hailed him Lord of Fontenaye,
 Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
 Of Tamworth tower and town;*
 And he, their courtesy to requite,
 Gave them a chain of twelve marks weight,
 All as he lighted down.
 "Now largesse, largesse, Lord Marmion,†
 Knight of the crest of gold!
 A blazoned shield, in battle won,
 Ne'er guarded heart so bold."—

XII.

They marshalled him to the castle-hall,
 Where the guests stood all aside,

* In earlier times, the family of Marmion, lords of Fontenay, in Normandy was highly distinguished. Robert de Marmion, Lord of Fontenay, a distinguished follower of the Conqueror, obtained a grant of the castle and town of Tamworth, and also of the manor of Scrivelby, in Lincolnshire, by the honorable service of being the royal champion, as the ancestors of Marmion had formerly been to the Dukes of Normandy. The family became extinct, and the office of royal champion was adjudged to Sir John Dymoke, to whom the manor of Scrivelby had descended by one of the co-heiresses of Robert de Marmion.

† This was the cry with which heralds and pursuivants were wont to acknowledge the bounty received from the knights. The heralds, like the minstrels, were a race allowed to have great claims upon the liberality of the knights, of whose feats they kept a record, and proclaimed them aloud, as in the text, upon suitable occasions.

And loudly flourished the trumpet-call,
 And the heralds loudly cried,
 —“Room, lordlings, room for Lord Marmion,
 With the crest and helm of gold!
 Full well we know the trophies won
 In the lists at Cottiswold:
 There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
 'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
 To him he lost his ladye-love,
 And to the king his land.
 Ourselves beheld the listed field,
 A sight both sad and fair;
 We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
 And saw his saddle bare;
 We saw the victor win the crest
 He wears with worthy pride;
 And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
 His foeman's scutcheon tied.
 Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight!
 Room, room, ye gentles gay,
 For him who conquered in the right,
 Marmion of Fontenaye!”—

XIII.

Then stepped to meet that noble lord,
 Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
 Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
 And Captain of the Hold.
 He led Lord Marmion to the deas,
 Raised o'er the pavement high,
 And placed him in the upper place—
 They feasted full and high:
 The whiles a Northern harper rude
 Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,
 “*How the fierce Thirwalls, and Riddleys all,
 Stout Willimondswick,
 And Hard-riding Dick,
 And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,
 Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
 And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw.*”
 Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
 The harper's barbarous lay;
 Yet much he praised the pains he took,

And well those pains did pay :
 For lady's suit, and minstrel's strain,
 By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

XIV.

"Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says,
 "Of your fair courtesy,
 I pray you bide some little space,
 In this poor tower with me.
 Here may you keep your arms from rust,
 May breathe your war-horse well ;
 Seldom hath passed a week, but giust
 Or feat of arms befell :
 The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
 And love to couch a spear ;—
 St. George! a stirring life they lead
 That have such neighbors near.
 Then stay with us a little space,
 Our northern wars to learn ;
 I pray you for your lady's grace."
 Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV.

The Captain marked his altered look,
 And gave a squire the sign ;
 A mighty wassail-bowl he took,
 And crowned it high with wine.
 "Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion :
 But first I pray thee fair,
 Where hast thou left that Page of thine,
 That used to serve thy cup of wine,
 Whose beauty was so rare ?
 When last in Raby towers we met,
 The boy I closely eyed,
 And often marked his cheeks were wet,
 With tears he fain would hide :
 His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
 To burnish shield, or sharpen brand,
 Or saddle battle-steed ;
 But meeter seemed for lady fair,
 To fan her cheek, or curl her hair,
 Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
 The slender silk to lead :

His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
 His bosom—when he sighed,
 The russet doublet's rugged fold
 Could scarce repel its pride!
 Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
 'To serve in lady's bower?
 Or was the gentle Page, in sooth,
 A gentle paramour?'—

XVI.

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest;
 He rolled his kindling eye,
 With pain his rising wrath suppressed,
 Yet made a calm reply:
 "That boy thou thought'st so goodly fair,
 He might not brook the northern air.
 More of his fate if thou wouldst learn,
 I left him sick in Lindisfarn:
 Enough of him.—But, Heron, say,
 Why does thy lovely lady gay
 Disdain to grace the hall to-day?
 Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
 Gone on some pious pilgrimage?"—
 He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
 Whispered light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII.

Unmarked, at least unrecked, the taunt,
 Careless the Knight replied,
 "No bird, whose feathers gayly flaunt,
 Delights in cage to bide:
 Norham is grim, and grated close,
 Hemmed in by battlement and fosse,
 And many a darksome tower;
 And better loves my lady bright,
 To sit in liberty and light,
 In fair Queen Margaret's bower.
 We hold our greyhound in our hand,
 Our falcon on our glove;
 But where shall we find leash or band,
 For dame that loves to rove?
 Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
 She'll stoop when she has tired her wing."—

XVIII.

“Nay, if with Royal James’s bride
 The lovely Lady Heron bide,
 Behold me here a messenger,
 Your tender greetings prompt to bear :
 For, to the Scottish court addressed,
 I journey at our king’s behest,
 And pray you, of your grace, provide
 For me, and mine, a trusty guide.
 I have not ridden in Scotland since
 James backed the cause of that mock prince,
 Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
 Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
 Then did I march with Surrey’s power,
 What time we razed old Ayton tower.”*

XIX.

“For such like need, my lord, I trow,
 Norham can find you guides enow ; †
 For here be some have pricked as far
 On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar ;
 Have drunk the monks of St. Bothan’s ale,
 And driven the beeves of Lauderdale ;
 Harried the wives of Greenlaw’s goods,
 And given them light to set their hoods.”—‡

XX.

“Now, in good sooth,” Lord Marmion cried,
 “Were I in warlike-wise to ride,
 A better guard I would not lack,
 Than your stout forayers at my back :
 But, as in form of peace I go,
 A friendly messenger, to know,

* In 1496, Perkin Warbeck was received honorably in Scotland ; and James IV., after conferring upon him in marriage his own relation, the Lady Catharine Gordon, made war on England in behalf of his pretensions. To retaliate an invasion of England, Surrey advanced into Berwickshire at the head of considerable forces, but retreated after taking the inconsiderable fortress of Ayton.

† The garrisons of the English castles of Wark, Norham, and Berwick were very troublesome neighbors to Scotland.

‡ This is a phrase, by which the Borderers jocularly intimated the burning of a house.

Why through all Scotland, near and far,
 Their king is mustering troops for war,
 The sight of plundering Border spears
 Might justify suspicious fears,
 And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
 Break out in some unseemly broil:
 A herald were my fitting guide;
 Or friar, sworn in peace to bide;
 Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
 Or strolling pilgrim, at the least.”—

XXI.

The Captain mused a little space,
 And passed his hand across his face.
 —“Fain would I find the guide you want,
 But ill may spare a pursnivant,
 The only men that safe can ride
 Mine errands on the Scottish side.
 Then, though a bishop built this fort,
 Few holy brethren here resort;
 Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
 Since our last siege, we have not seen:
 The mass he might not sing or say,
 Upon one stinted meal a-day;
 So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
 And prayed for our success the while.
 Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
 Is all too well in case to ride.
 The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein
 The wildest war-horse in your train;
 But then, no spearman in the hall
 Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
 Friar John of Tillmouth were the man;
 A blithesome brother at the can,
 A welcome guest in hall and bower,
 He knows each castle, town, and tower,
 In which the wine and ale is good,
 ’Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
 But that good man, as ill befalls,
 Hath seldom left our castle walls,
 Since on the vigil of St. Bede,
 In evil hour, he crossed the Tweed,
 To teach Dame Alison her creed.

Old Bughtrig found him with his wife ;
 And John, an enemy to strife,
 Sans frock and hood, fled for his life.
 The jealous churl hath deeply swore,
 That, if again he ventures o'er,
 He shall shrieve penitent no more.
 Little he loves such risks, I know ;
 Yet, in your guard, perchance will go."

XXII.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
 Carved to his uncle, and that lord,
 And reverently took up the word.
 "Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
 If harm should hap to Brother John.
 He is a man of mirthful speech,
 Can many a game and gambol teach ;
 Full well at tables can he play,
 And sweep at bowls the stake away.
 None can a lustier carol bawl,
 The needfulest among us all,
 When time hangs heavy in the hall,
 And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
 And we can neither hunt, nor ride
 A foray on the Scottish side.
 The vowed revenge of Bughtrig rude,
 May end in worse than loss of hood.
 Let Friar John, in safety, still
 In chimney-corner snore his fill,
 Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill ;
 Last night, to Norham there came one,
 Will better guide Lord Marmion."—
 "Nephew," quoth Heron, "by my fay,
 Well hast thou spoke ; say forth thy say."

XXIII.

"Here is a holy Palmer* come,
 From Salem first, and last from Rome ;

* A *Palmer*, opposed to a *Pilgrim*, was one who made it his sole business to visit different holy shrines ; travelling incessantly, and subsisting by charity : whereas the *Pilgrim* retired to his usual home and occupations, when he had paid his devotions at the particular spot which was the object of his pilgrimage.

One, that hath kissed the blessed tomb,
 And visited each holy shrine,
 In Araby and Palestine.
 On hills of Armenie hath been,
 Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;
 By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
 Which parted at the prophet's rod;
 In Sinai's wilderness he saw
 The Mount, where Israel heard the law,
 Mid thunder-dint, and flashing levin,
 And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
 He shows Saint James's cockle-shell,
 Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell;
 And of that Grot where Olives nod,
 Where, darling of each heart and eye,
 From all the youth of Sicily,
 Saint Rosalie retired to God.*

XXIV.

"To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
 Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
 Cuthbert of Durham, and Saint Bede,
 For his sins' pardon hath he prayed.
 He knows the passes of the North,
 And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;
 Little he eats, and long will wake,
 And drinks but of the stream or lake.
 This were a guide o'er moor and dale;
 But, when our John hath quaffed his ale,
 As little as the wind that blows,
 And warms itself against his nose,
 Kens he, or cares, which way he goes."

XXV.

"Gramercy!" quoth Lord Marmion,
 "Full loth were I, that Friar John,
 That venerable man, for me,
 Were placed in fear, or jeopardy.
 If this same Palmer will me lead,

* Sante Rosalia was of Palermo, and born of a very noble family, and abhorred so much the vanities of this world, that she forsook her father's house, and never was more heard of, till her body was found in that cleft of a rock, on that almost inaccessible mountain, where now her chapel is built."

From hence to Holy-Rood,
 Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
 Instead of cockle-shell or 'bead,
 With angels fair and good.
 I love such holy rambles; still
 They know to charm a weary hill,
 With song, romance, or lay:
 Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
 Some lying legend at the least,
 They bring to cheer the way."—

XXVI.

"Ah! noble Sir," young Selby said,
 And finger on his lip he laid,
 "This man knows much, perchance e'en more
 Than he could learn by holy lore.
 Still to himself he's muttering,
 And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
 Last night we listened at his cell;
 Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,
 He murmured on till morn, how'er
 No living mortal could be near.
 Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
 As other voices spoke again.
 I cannot tell—I like it not—
 Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
 No conscience clear, and void of wrong,
 Can rest awake, and pray so long.
 Himself still sleeps before his beads
 Have marked ten aves, and two creeds."—

XXVII.

"Let pass," quoth Marmion; "by my fay,
 This man shall guide me on my way,
 Although the great arch-fiend and he
 Had sworn themselves of company;
 So please you, gentle youth, to call
 This Palmer to the castle-hall.—
 The summoned Palmer came in place;
 His sable cowl o'erhung his face;
 In his black mantle was he clad,
 With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
 On his broad shoulders wrought;

The scallop shell his cap did deck ;
 The crucifix around his neck
 Was from Loretto brought ;
 His sandals were with travel tore,
 Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore ;
 The faded palm-branch in his hand,
 Showed pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
 Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
 Or had a statelier step withal,
 Or looked more high and keen ;
 For no saluting did he wait,
 But strode across the hall of state,
 And fronted Marmion where he sate,
 As he his peer had been.
 But his gaunt frame was worn with toil ;
 His cheek was sunk, alas the while !
 And when he struggled at a smile,
 His eye looked haggard wild.
 Poor wretch ! the mother that him bare,
 If she had been in presence there,
 In his wan face and sun-burned hair,
 She had not known her child.
 Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
 Soon change the form that best we know—
 For deadly fear can time outgo,
 And blanch at once the hair ;
 Hard toil can roughen form and face,
 And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
 Nor does old age a wrinkle trace,
 More deeply than despair.
 Happy whom none of these befall,
 But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask ;
 The Palmer took on him the task,
 So he would march with morning tide,
 To Scottish court to be his guide.
 —“ But I have solemn vows to pay,
 And may not linger by the way,

To fair Saint Andrew's bound,
 Within the ocean-cave to pray,*
 Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
 From midnight to the dawn of day,
 Sung to the billows' sound;
 Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
 Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
 And the crazed brain restore:†—
 Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
 Could back to peace my bosom bring,
 Or bid it throb no more!"—

XXX.

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
 Where wine and spices richly steep,
 In massive bowl of silver deep,
 The page presents on knee.
 Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
 The Captain pledged his noble guest,
 The cup went through among the rest,
 Who drained it merrily;
 Alone the Palmer passed it by,
 Though Selby pressed him courteously.
 This was the sign the feast was o'er;
 It hushed the merry wassail roar,
 The minstrels ceased to sound.
 Soon in the castle naught was heard,
 But the slow footstep of the guard,
 Pacing his sober round.

XXXI.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
 And first the chapel doors unclose;
 Then, after morning rites were done,
 (A hasty mass from Friar John,)

* St. Regulus (*Scotticé*, St. Rule), a monk of Patræ, in Achaia, warned by a vision, is said, A. D. 370, to have sailed westward until he landed at St. Andrew's, in Scotland, where he founded a chapel and tower. A cave, nearly fronting the ruinous castle of the Archbishops of St. Andrew's, bears the name of this religious person.

† St. Fillan was a Scottish saint of some reputation. There are in Perthshire several wells and springs dedicated to St. Fillan, which are still places of pilgrimage and offerings, even among the Protestants

And knight and squire had broke their fast,
 On rich, substantial repast,
 Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse.
 Then came the stirrup-cup in course;
 Between the Baron and his host,
 No point of courtesy was lost:
 High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
 Solemn excuse the Captain made,
 Till, filing from the gate, had past
 That noble train, their Lord the last.
 Then loudly rung the trumpet-call;
 Thundered the cannon from the wall,
 And shook the Scottish shore;
 Around the castle eddied, slow,
 Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
 And hid its turrets hoar;
 Till they rolled forth upon the air,
 And met the river breezes there,
 Which gave again the prospect fair.



INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND.

To the REV. JOHN MARRIOTT, M. A.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

THE scenes are desert now and bare,
 Where flourished once a forest fair,*
 When these waste glens with copse were lined,
 And peopled with the hart and hind.
 Yon thorn—perchance whose prickly spears
 Have fenced him for three hundred years,
 While fell around his green compeers—
 Yon lonely thorn, would he could tell
 The changes of his parent dell,

* Ettrick Forest, now a range of mountainous sheep-walks, was anciently reserved for the pleasure of the royal chase. When the king hunted there, he often summoned the array of the country to meet and assist his sport. These huntings had, of course, a military character, and attendance upon them was a part of the duty of a vassal.

Since he, so gray and stubborn now,
 Waved in each breeze a sapling bough ;
 Would he could tell how deep the shade,
 A thousand mingled branches made ;
 How broad the shadows of the oak,
 How clung the rowan* to the rock,
 And through the foliage showed his head,
 With narrow leaves, and berries red ;
 What pines on every mountain sprung,
 O'er every dell what birches hung,
 In every breeze what aspens shook,
 What alders shaded every brook !

“ Here, in my shade,” methinks he'd say,
 “ The mighty stag at noontide lay :
 The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,
 (The neighboring dingle bears his name,)
 With lurching step around me prowled,
 And stop against the moon to howl ;
 The mountain boar, on battle set,
 His tusks upon my stem would whet ;
 While doe and roe, and red-deer good,
 Have bounded by through gay green-wood.
 Then oft, from Newark's riven tower,
 Sallied a Scottish monarch's power :
 A thousand vassals mustered round,
 With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound ;
 And I might see the youth intent,
 Guard every pass with crossbow bent ;
 And through the brake the rangers stalk,
 And falc'ners hold the ready hawk ;
 And foresters in green-wood trim,
 Lead in the leash the gaze-hounds grim,
 Attentive, as the bratchet's† bay
 From the dark covert drove the prey,
 To slip them as he broke away.
 The startled quarry bounds amain,
 As fast the gallant grey-hounds strain ;
 Whistles the arrow from the bow,
 Answers the arquebuss below ;
 While all the rocking hills reply,

* Mountain-ash.

† Slow-hound.

To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely."—

Of such proud huntings, many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettrick, and on Yarrow,
Where erst the Outlaw drew his arrow.*
But not more blithe that silvan court,
Than we have been at humbler sport;
Though small our pomp, and mean our game,
Our mirth, dear Mariott, was the same.
Remember'st thou my grey-hounds true?
O'erholt or hill there never flew,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.
Nor dull, between each merry chase,
Passed by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,
In Classic, and in Gothic lore:
We marked each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;
Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
But had its legend, or its song.
All silent now—for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill!
No longer, from thy mountains dun,
The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
And, while his honest heart glows warm,
At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
And drinks, "The Chieftain of the Hills!"
No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
Fair as the elves whom Janet saw,
By moonlight, dance on Carterhaugh;
No youthful barons left to grace,
The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
And ape, in manly step and tone,
The majesty of Oberon:

* The tale of the Outlaw Murray, who held out Newark Castle and Ettrick Forest against the king, may be found in the "Border Minstrelsy." In the Macfarlane MS., among other causes of James the Fifth's charter to the burgh, is mentioned, that the citizens assisted him to suppress this dangerous outlaw

And she is gone, whose lovely face
 Is but her least and lowest grace ;
 Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given
 To show our earth the charms of heaven,
 She could not glide along the air,
 With form more light, or face more fair.
 No more the widow's deafened ear
 Grows quick that lady's step to hear :
 At noontide she expects her not,
 Nor busies her to trim the cot ;
 Pensive she turns her humming wheel,
 Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal ;
 Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
 The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair,—which hills so closely bind,
 Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
 Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
 Till all his eddying currents boil,—
 Her long-descended lord is gone,
 And left us by the stream alone.
 And much I miss those sportive boys,
 Companions of my mountain joys,
 Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
 When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
 Close to my side, with what delight,
 They pressed to hear of Wallace wight,
 When, pointing to his airy mound,
 I called his ramparts holy ground !*
 Kindled their brows to hear me speak ;
 And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,
 Despite the difference of our years,
 Return again the glow of theirs.
 Ah, happy boys ! such feelings pure,
 They will not, cannot long endure ;
 Condemned to stem the world's rude tide,
 You may not linger by the side ;
 For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
 And Passion ply the sail and oar.
 Yet cherish the remembrance still,
 Of the lone mountain, and the rill ;

* There is, on a high mountainous ridge above the farm of Ashestiel, a fosse called Wallace's Trench.

For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
And you will think right frequently,
But, well I hope, without a sigh,
On the free hours that we have spent,
Together, on the brown hill's bent.

When, musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain ;
There is a pleasure in this pain :
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impressed.
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils ;
But, in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment,
'Twixt resignation and content.
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone St. Mary's silent lake ;*
Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor sedge,
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge ;
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink ;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view ;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely, bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there,
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scattered pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour :
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing concealed might lie ;

* This beautiful sheet of water forms the reservoir from which the Yarrow takes its source. Near the lower extremity of the lake are the ruins of Dryhope Tower, the birthplace of Mary Scott, daughter of Philip Scott, of Dryhope, and famous by the traditional name of the Flower of Yarrow. She was married to Walter Scott of Harden, no less renowned for his depredations, than his bride for her beauty.

Nor point retiring, hides a dell,
 Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
 There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
 You see that all is loneliness:
 And silence aids—though these steep hills
 Send to the lake a thousand rills;
 In summer tide, so soft they weep,
 The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
 Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
 So stilly is the solitude.

Naught living meets the eye or ear,
 But well I ween the dead are near;
 For though in feudal strife, a foe
 Hath laid our Our Lady's chapel low,*
 Yet still, beneath the hallowed soil,
 The peasant rests him from his toil,
 And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
 Where erst his simple fathers prayed.

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
 And fate had cut my ties to life,
 Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to dwell,
 And rear again the chaplain's cell,
 Like that same peaceful hermitage,
 Where Milton longed to spend his age.
 'Twere sweet to mark the setting day,
 On Bourhope's lonely top decay;
 And, as it faint and feeble died,
 On the broad lake and mountain's side,
 To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;
 Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
 And leave us dark, forlorn, and gray;"—
 Then gaze on Dryhope's ruined tower,
 And think on Yarrow's faded Flower:
 And when that mountain-sound I heard,
 Which bids us be for storm prepared,
 The distant rustling of his wings,
 As up his force the Tempest brings,

* The chapel of Saint Mary of the Lowes (*de lacubus*) was situated on the eastern side of the lake to which it gives name. It was injured by the clan of Scott, in a feud with the Cranstouns; but continued to be a place of worship during the seventeenth century. The vestiges of the building can now scarcely be traced; but the burial-ground is still used as a cemetery.

'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's grave;*
That wizard Priest's, whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust;
On which no sunbeam ever shines—
(So superstition's creed divines,)
Thence view the lake, with sullen roar,
Heave her broad billows to the shore;
And mark the wild swans mount the gale,
Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave:
Then, when against the driving hail
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp, and trim my fire:
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway,
And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the Wizard Priest was come,
To claim again his ancient home!
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and strange,
Till from the task my brow I cleared,
And smiled to think that I had feared.

But chief, 'twere sweet to think such life,
(Though but escape from fortune's strife,)
Something most matchless good and wise,
A great and grateful sacrifice;
And deem each hour, to musing given,
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
Such peaceful solitudes displease:
He loves to drown his bosom's jar
Amid the elemental war:
And my black Palmer's choice had been
Some ruder and more savage scene,

* At one corner of the burial-ground of the demolished chapel, but without its precincts, is a small mound, called *Binram's Corse*, where tradition deposits the remains of a necromantic priest, the former tenant of the chapel.

Like that which frowns round dark Lochskene,*
 There eagles scream from isle to shore ;
 Down all the rocks the torrents roar ;
 O'er the black waves incessant driven,
 Dark mists infect the summer heaven ;
 Through the rude barriers of the lake,
 Away its hurrying waters break,
 Faster and whiter dash and curl,
 Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
 Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
 Thunders the viewless stream below,
 Diving, as if condemned to lave
 Some demon's subterranean cave,
 Who, prisoned by enchanter's spell,
 Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
 And well that Palmer's form and mien
 Had suited with the stormy scene,
 Just on the edge, straining his ken
 To view the bottom of the den,
 Where deep, deep down, and far within,
 Toils with the rocks the roaring linn ;
 Then issuing forth one foamy wave,
 And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
 White as the snowy charger's tail,
 Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriott, thy harp, on Isis strung,
 To many a border theme has rung :
 Then list to me, and thou shalt know
 Of this mysterious Man of Woe.



CANTO SECOND.

The Convent.

I.

THE breeze which swept away the smoke,
 Round Norham Castle rolled ;
 When all the loud artillery spoke,
 With lightning-flash and thunder-stroke,

* A mountain lake, of considerable size, at the head of the Moffat-water.

As Marmion left the Hold,
It curled not Tweed alone, that breeze;
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew, and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloistered pile,
Bound to Saint Cuthbert's Holy Isle,
It bore a bark along.
Upon the gale she stooped her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home;
The merry seamen laughed, to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joyed they in their honored freight;
For, on the deck, in chair of state,*
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to green-wood shades,
Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view,
Their wonderment engage.
One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite;
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray;
Then shrieked, because the sea-dog, nigh,
His round black head, and sparkling eye,

* The Abbey of Whitby contained both monks and nuns of the Benedictine order; but, contrary to what was usual in such establishments, the abbess was superior to the abbot. Lindisfarne, was called Holy Island, from the sanctity of its ancient monastery, and from its having been the episcopal seat of the see of Durham during the early ages of British Christianity. St. Cuthbert, who was sixth bishop of Durham, bestowed the name of his "patrimony" upon the extensive property of the see. Lindisfarne is not properly an island, but rather, a semi-isle; for although surrounded by the sea at full tide, the ebb leaves the sands dry between it and the opposite coast of Northumberland, from which it is about two miles distant.

Reared o'er the foaming spray ;
 And one would still adjust her veil,
 Disordered by the summer gale,
 Perchance lest some more worldly eye
 Her dedicated charms might spy ;
 Perchance, because such action graced
 Her fair-turned arm and slender waist.
 Light was each simple bosom there,
 Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
 The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

III.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
 But early took the veil and hood,
 Ere upon life she cast a look,
 Or knew the world that she forsook
 Fair too she was, and kind had been
 As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
 For her a timid lover sigh,
 Nor knew the influence of her eye ;
 Love, to her ear, was but a name,
 Combined with vanity and shame ;
 Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
 Bounded within the cloister wall :
 The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
 Was of monastic rule the breach ;
 And her ambition's highest aim,
 To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
 For this she gave her ample dower,
 To raise the convent's eastern tower ;
 For this, with carving rare and quaint,
 She decked the chapel of the saint,
 And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
 With ivory and gems embost.
 The poor her convent's bounty blest,
 The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
 Reformed on Benedictine school ;
 Her cheek was pale, her form was spare ;
 Vigils, and penitence austere,
 Had early quenched the light of youth,

But gentle was the dame, in sooth ;
Though vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey,
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame ;
Summoned to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
A chapter of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict,
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

V.

Naught say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair ;
As yet a novice unprofessed,
Lovely and gentle, but distressed.
She was betrothed to one now dead—
Or worse, who had dishonored fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one, who loved her for her land :
Herself almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom,
Her blasted hopes and withered bloom.

VI.

She sat upon the galley's prow,
And seemed to mark the waves below ;
Nay seemed, so fixed her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.
She saw them not—'twas seeming all—
Far other scenes her thoughts recall,—
A sun-scorched desert, waste and bare,
Nor wave nor breezes murmured there ;
There saw she, where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heaped the sand,
To hide it till the jackals come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb.—
See what a woeful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven !

VII.

Lovely, and gentle, and distressed—
These charms might tame the fiercest breast;
Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontrolled,
The shaggy monarch of the wood,
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame
Oft put the lion's rage to shame:
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised, with their bowl and knife,
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
Prisoned in Cuthbert's islet gray.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland;
Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,
And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
They marked, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They passed the tower of Widderington,
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell
To the good Saint who owned the cell;
Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;
And next, they crossed themselves, to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
On Dunstanborough's caverned shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, marked they here,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;

Then from the coast they bore away
And reached the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way:
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandalled feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle, with its battled walls,
The ancient monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frowned,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alleyed walk
To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had poured his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the wind's eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilt in a later style,
Showed where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And mouldered in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,

The pointed angles of each tower :
 Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
 Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.

Soon as they neared his turrets strong,
 The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
 And with the sea-wave and the wind,
 Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
 And made harmonious close ;
 Then answering from the sandy shore,
 Half-drowned amid the breakers' roar,
 According chorus rose :
 Down to the haven of the Isle,
 The monks and nuns in order file,
 From Cuthbert's cloisters grim ;
 Banner, and cross, and relics there,
 To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare ;
 And, as they caught the sounds on air,
 They echoed back the hymn.
 The islanders, in joyous mood,
 Rushed emulously through the flood,
 To hale the bark to land ;
 Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
 Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
 And blessed them with her hand.

XII.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
 Suppose the Convent banquet made ;
 All through the holy dome,
 Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
 Wherever vestal maid might pry,
 Nor risk to meet unhallowed eye,
 The stranger sisters roam :
 Till fell the evening damp with dew,
 And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
 For there even summer-night is chill.
 Then, having strayed and gazed their fill,
 They closed around the fire ;
 And all, in turn, essayed to paint
 The rival merits of their saint,

A theme that ne'er can tire
 A holy maid; for, be it known,
 That their saint's honor is their own.

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
 How to their house three barons bold
 Must menial service do;
 While horns blow out a note of shame,
 And monks cry, "Fie upon your name!
 In wrath, for loss of silvan game,
 Saint Hilda's priest ye slew!"
 "This, on Ascension-day, each year,
 While laboring on our harbor-pier,
 Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear."
 They told, how in their convent cell
 A Saxon princess once did dwell,
 The lovely Edelfled;*
 And how, of thousand snakes, each one
 Was changed into a coil of stone,†
 When holy Hilda prayed;
 Themselves, within their holy bound,
 Their stony folds had often found.
 They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,‡
 As over Whitby's towers they sail,
 And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
 They do their homage to the saint.

XIV.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail
 To vie with these in holy tale;

* She was the daughter of King Osway, who, in gratitude to Heaven for the great victory which he won in 655, against Penda, the Pagan king of Mercia, dedicated Edelfeda, then but a year old, to the service of God in the monastery of Whitby, of which St. Hilda was then abbess. She afterwards adorned the place of her education with great magnificence.

† The relics of the snakes which infested the precincts of the convent, and were, at the abbess's prayer, not only beheaded, but petrified, are still found about the rocks, and are termed by fossilists *Ammonites*.

‡ Mr. Charlton, in his History of Whitby, points out the true origin of the fable, from the number of sea-gulls, that, when flying from a storm, often alight near Whitby; and from the woodcocks, and other birds of passage, which do the same upon their arrival on shore, after a long flight.

His body's resting-place, of old,
 How oft their patron changed, they told;*
 How, when the rude Dane burned their pile,
 The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;
 O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
 From sea to sea, from shore to shore.
 Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore:

They rested them in fair Melrose;
 But though, alive, he loved it well,
 Not there his relics might repose;
 For, wondrous tale to tell!

In his stone coffin forth he rides,
 A ponderous bark for river tides,
 Yet light as gossamer it glides,
 Downward to Tilmouth cell.

Nor long was his abiding there,
 For southward did the saint repair;
 Chester-le-Street, and Rippon, saw
 His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw

Hailed him with joy and fear;
 And, after many wanderings past,
 He chose his lordly seat at last,
 Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
 Looks down upon the Wear:
 There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
 His relics are in secret laid;

But none may know the place,
 Save of his holiest servants three,
 Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
 Who share that wondrous grace.

* St. Cuthbert died in the Farne islands, and his body was brought to Lindisfarne, where it remained until a descent of the Danes, about 763, when the monks fled to Scotland, with his relics: they paraded him through Scotland for several years, and came as far west as Whithorn, in Galloway, whence they attempted to sail for Ireland, but were driven back by tempests. He at length made a halt at Norham; thence he went to Melrose, where he remained stationary for a short time, and then caused himself to be launched upon the Tweed in a stone coffin, which landed him at Tilmouth, in Northumberland. From Tilmouth, Cuthbert wandered into Yorkshire; and at length made a long stay at Chester-le-Street, to which the Bishop's See was transferred. At length, the Danes continuing to infest the country, the monks removed to Rippon for a season; and it was in return from thence to Chester-le-Street, that, passing through a forest called Dunholme, the saint and his carriage became immovable at a place named Wardlaw, or Wardilaw.

XV.

Who may his miracles declare!
 Even Scotland's dauntless king, and heir,
 (Although with them they led
 Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
 And Lodon's knights, all sheathed in mail,
 And the bold men of Teviotdale,)

Before his standard fled.*

'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
 Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
 And turned the Conqueror back again,†
 When, with his Norman bowyer band,
 He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.

But fain St. Hilda's nuns would learn,
 If, on a rock by Lindisfarne,
 Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
 The sea-born beads that bear his name:‡
 Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
 And said they might his shape behold,

And hear his anvil sound;

A deadened clang,—a huge dim form,
 Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm

And night were closing round.

But this, as tale of idle fame,
 The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,
 Far different was the scene of woe,

* When David I., with his son Henry, invaded Northumberland in 1136, the English host marched against them under the holy banner of St. Cuthbert: to the efficacy of which was imputed the great victory which they obtained at Northallerton.

† The Saint we are told appeared in a vision to Alfred, when lurking in the marshes of Glastonbury, and promised him assistance and victory over his heathen enemies. As to William the Conqueror, having intimated an indiscreet curiosity to view the Saint's body, he was, while in the act of commanding the shrine to be opened, seized with heat, sickness, and such a panic terror, that he fled and never drew his bridle till he got to the river Tees.

‡ Cuthbert, since his death, has acquired the reputation of forging those *Entrochi* which are found among the rocks of Holy Island, and pass there by the name of St. Cuthbert's Beads. While at this task, he is supposed to sit during the night upon a certain rock, and use another as his anvil.

Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
 Council was held of life and death.
 It was more dark and lone, that vault,
 Than the worst dungeon cell ;
 Old Colwulf built it,* for his fault,
 In penitence to dwell,
 When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
 The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
 This den, which, chilling every sense
 Of feeling, hearing, sight,
 Was called the Vault of Penitence,
 Excluding air and light,
 Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
 A place of burial, for such dead
 As, having died in mortal sin,
 Might not be laid the church within.
 'Twas now a place of punishment ;
 Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
 As reached the upper air,
 The hearers blessed themselves, and said
 The spirits of the sinful dead
 Bemoaned their torments there.

XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,
 Did of this penitential aisle
 Some vague tradition go,
 Few only, save the Abbot, knew
 Where the place lay ; and still more few
 Were those, who had from him the clew
 To that dread vault to go.
 Victim and executioner
 Were blindfold when transported there.
 In low dark rounds the arches hung,
 From the rude rock the side-walls sprung ;
 The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,
 Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,

* Ceolwolf, or Colwulf, King of Northumberland, flourished in the eighth century. He abdicated the throne about 738, and retired to Holy Island, where he died in the odor of sanctity. These penitential vaults served as places of meeting for the chapter, when measures of uncommon severity were to be adopted. But their most frequent use, as implied by the name, was as places for performing penances, or undergoing punishment.

Were all the pavement of the floor;
 The mildew drops fell one by one,
 With tinkling plash, upon the stone.
 A cresset,* in an iron chain,
 Which served to light this drear domain.
 With damp and darkness seemed to strive,
 As if it scarce might keep alive;
 And yet it dimly served to show
 The awful conclave met below.

XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
 Were placed the heads of convents three:
 All servants of Saint Benedict,
 The statutes of whose order strict
 On iron table lay;
 In long black dress, on seats of stone,
 Behind were these three judges shown,
 By the pale cresset's ray:
 The Abbess of Saint Hilda's, there,
 Sat for a space with visage bare,
 Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
 And tear-drops that for pity fell,
 She closely drew her veil:
 Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
 By her proud mien and flowing dress,
 Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,†
 And she with awe looks pale:
 And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
 Has long been quenched by age's night,
 Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
 Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace, is shown,
 Whose look is hard and stern,—
 Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style;
 For sanctity called, through the isle,
 The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair;
 But, though an equal fate they share,

* Artique chandelier.

† As in the case of Whitby and of Holy Island, the introduction of nuns at Tynemouth, in the reign of Henry VIII., is an anachronism.

Yet one alone deserves our care.
 Her sex a page's dress belied ;
 The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
 Obscured her charms, but could not hide.

Her cap down o'er her face she drew :

And, on her doublet breast,
 She tried to hide the badge of blue,
 Lord Marmion's falcon crest.

But, at the Prioress' command,
 A Monk undid the silken band,
 That tied her tresses fair,
 And raised the bonnet from her head,
 And down her slender form they spread,
 In ringlets rich and rare.

Constance de Beverley they know,
 Sister professed of Fontevraud,
 Whom the church numbered with the dead,
 For broken vows and convent fled.

XXI.

When thus her face was given to view,
 (Although so pallid was her hue,
 It did a ghastly contrast bear
 To those bright ringlets glistening fair,)
 Her look composed, and steady eye,
 Bespoke a matchless constancy ;
 And there she stood so calm and pale,
 That, but her breathing did not fail,
 And motion slight of eye and head,
 And of her bosom, warranted
 That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
 You might have thought a form of wax,
 Wrought to the life, was there ;
 So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
 Such as does murder for a meed ;
 Who, but of fear, knows no control,
 Because his conscience, seared and foul,
 Feels not the import of his deed ;
 One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
 Beyond his own more brute desires.

Such tools the tempter ever needs,
To do the savagest of deeds ;
For them no visioned terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt ,
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death,—alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash ;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak !
For there were seen, in that dark wall,
Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall.
Who enters at such grisly door,
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
In each a slender meal was laid,
Of roots, of water, and of bread :
By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless ;
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Showed the grim entrance of the porch :
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were displayed,
And building tools in order laid.*

XXIV.

These executioners were chose,
As men who were with mankind foes,
And, with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired ;
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,

* It is well known, that the religious who broke their vows of chastity, were subjected to the same penalty as the Roman vestals in a similar case. A small niche, sufficient to inclose their bodies, was made in the massive wall of the convent ; a slender pittance of food and water was deposited in it, and the awful words, VADE IN PACEM, were the signal for immuring the criminal.

Strove, by deep penance, to efface
 Of some foul crime the stain ;
 For, as the vassals of her will,
 Such men the church selected still,
 As either joyed in doing ill,
 Or thought more grace to gain,
 If, in her cause, they wrestled down
 Feelings their nature strove to own.
 By strange device were they brought there,
 They knew not how, and knew not where.

XXV.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
 To speak the Chapter's doom,
 On those the wall was to inclose,
 Alive, within the tomb ;
 But stopped, because that woeful maid,
 Gathering her powers, to speak essayed.
 Twice she essayed, and twice in vain ;
 Her accents might no utterance gain ;
 Naught but imperfect murmurs slip
 From her convulsed and quivering lip :
 'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
 You seemed to hear a distant rill—
 'Twas ocean's swells and falls ;
 For though this vault of sin and fear
 Was to the sounding surge so near,
 A tempest there you scarce could hear,
 So massive were the walls.

XXVI.

At length, an effort sent apart
 The blood that curdled to her heart,
 And light came to her eye,
 And color dawned upon her cheek,
 A hectic and a fluttered streak,
 Like that left on the Cheviot peak,
 By Autumn's stormy sky ;
 And when her silence broke at length,
 Still as she spoke, she gathered strength,
 And armed herself to bear.
 It was a fearful sight to see

Such high resolve and constancy,
In form so soft and fair.

XXVII.

“I speak not to implore your grace;
Well know I, for one minute’s space
 Successful might I sue:
Nor do I speak your prayers to gain;
For if a death of lingering pain,
To cleanse my sins, be penance vain;
 Vain are your masses too.—
I listened to a traitor’s tale,
I left the convent and the veil;
For three long years I bowed my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride;
And well my folly’s meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.—
He saw young Clara’s face more fair,
He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
And Constance was beloved no more.—
 ’Tis an old tale, and often told;
 But, did my fate and wish agree,
 Ne’er had been read, in story old,
 Of maiden true betrayed for gold,
 That loved, or was avenged, like me!

XXVIII.

“The king approved his favorite’s aim;
In vain a rival barred his claim,
 Whose faith with Clare’s was plight,
For he attaints that rival’s fame
With treason’s charge—and on they came,
 In mortal lists to fight.
 Their oaths are said,
 Their prayers are prayed,
 Their lances in the rest are laid,
 They meet in mortal shock;
And hark! the throng, with thundering cry,
Shout, ‘Marmion, Marmion, to the sky!
 De Wilton to the block!’

Say ye, who preach heaven shall decide,
 When in the lists two champions ride,
 Say, was heaven's justice here?
 When, loyal in his love and faith,
 Wilton found overthrow or death,
 Beneath a traitor's spear.
 How false the charge, how true he fell,
 This guilty packet best can tell."—
 Then drew a packet from her breast,
 Paused, gathered voice, and spoke the rest.

XXIX.

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid;
 To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
 The hated match to shun.
 'Ho! shifts she thus?' King Henry cried,
 'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
 If she were sworn a nun.'
 One way remained—the king's command
 Sent Marmion to the Scottish land:
 I lingered here, and rescue planned
 For Clara and for me:
 This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
 He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
 And, by his drugs, my rival fair
 A saint in heaven should be.
 But ill the dastard kept his oath,
 Whose cowardice hath undone us both.

XXX.

"And now my tongue the secret tells,
 Not that remorse my bosom swells,
 But to assure my soul, that none
 Shall ever wed with Marmion.
 Had fortune my last hope betrayed,
 This packet, to the king conveyed,
 Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
 Although my heart that instant broke.—
 Now, men of death, work forth your will,
 For I can suffer, and be still;
 And come he slow, or come he fast,
 It is but death who comes at last.

XXXI.

"Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
 Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!
 If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
 Full soon such vengeance will he take,
 That you shall wish the fiery Dane
 Had rather been your guest again.
 Behind, a darker hour ascends!
 The altars quake, the crosier bends,
 The ire of a despotic king
 Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
 Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
 Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
 Some traveller then shall find my bones,
 Whitening amid disjointed stones.
 And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
 Marvel such relics here should be."—

XXXII.

Fixed was her look, and stern her air;
 Back from her shoulders streamed her hair;
 The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
 Stared up erectly from her head;
 Her figure seemed to rise more high;
 Her voice, despair's wild energy
 Had given a tone of prophecy.
 Appalled the astonished conclave sate;
 With stupid eyes, the men of fate
 Gazed on the light inspired form,
 And listened for the avenging storm;
 The judges felt the victim's dread;
 No hand was moved, no word was said,
 Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
 Raising his sightless balls to heaven:—
 "Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
 Sinful brother, part in peace!"—
 From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
 Of execution too, and tomb,
 Paced forth the judges three;
 Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
 The butcher-work that there befell,
 When they had glided from the cell
 Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

An hundred winding steps convey
 That conclave to the upper day;
 But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
 They heard the shriekings of despair,
 And many a stifled groan:
 With speed their upward way they take,
 (Such speed as age and fear can make,)
 And crossed themselves for terror's sake,
 As hurrying, tottering on.
 Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
 They seemed to hear a dying groan,
 And bade the passing knell to toll
 For welfare of a parting soul.
 Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
 Northumbrian rocks in answer rung;
 To Warkworth cell the echoes rolled,
 His beads the wakeful hermit told;
 The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
 But slept ere half a prayer he said:
 So far was heard the mighty knell,
 The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
 Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
 Listed before, aside, behind;
 Then couched him down beside the hind,
 And quaked among the mountain fern,
 To hear that sound so dull and stern.



INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD.

To WILLIAM ERSKINE, Esq.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest

LIKE April morning clouds, that pass,
 With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
 And imitate, on field and furrow,
 Life's checkered scene of joy and sorrow;
 Like streamlet of the mountain north,

Now in a torrent racing forth,
 Now winding slow its silver train,
 And almost slumbering on the plain;
 Like breezes of the autumn day,
 Whose voice inconstant dies away,
 And ever swells again as fast,
 When the ear deems its murmur past;
 Thus various, my romantic theme
 Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning dream.
 Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
 Of Light and Shade's inconstant race;
 Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
 Weaving its maze irregular;
 And pleased, we listen as the breeze
 Heaves its wild sigh through Autumn trees.
 Then wild as cloud, or stream, or gale,
 Flow on, flow unconfined, my tale.

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell,
 I love the license all too well,
 In sound now lowly, and now strong,
 To raise the desultory song?--
 Oft, when 'mid such capricious chime,
 Some transient fit of loftier rhyme,
 To thy kind judgment seemed excuse
 For many an error of the muse;
 Oft hast thou said, "If, still misspent,
 Thine hours to poetry are lent,
 Go, and to tame thy wandering course,
 Quaff from the fountain at the source;
 Approach those masters, o'er whose tomb
 Immortal laurels ever bloom:
 Instructive of the feebler bard,
 Still from the grave their voice is heard;
 From them, and from the paths they showed,
 Choose honored guide and practised road;
 Nor ramble on through brake and maze,
 With harpers rude of barbarous days.

"Or deem'st thou not our later time
 Yields topic meet for classic rhyme?
 Hast thou no elegiac verse
 For Brunswick's venerable hearse?
 What! not a line, a tear, a sigh,

When valor bleeds for liberty?—
 Oh, hero of that glorious time,
 When, with unrivalled light sublime,—
 Though martial Austria, and though all
 The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
 Though banded Europe stood her foes,—
 The star of Brandenburgh arose!
 Thou couldst not live to see her beam
 Forever quenched in Jena's stream.
 Lamented chief!—it was not given,
 To thee to change the doom of heaven,
 And crush that dragon in his birth,
 Predestined scourge of guilty earth.
 Lamented chief!—not thine the power,
 To save in that presumptuous hour,
 When Prussia hurried to the field,
 And snatched the spear, but left the shield:
 Valor and skill 'twas thine to try,
 And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
 Ill had it seemed thy silver hair
 The last, the bitterest pang to share,
 For princedoms reft, and scutcheons riven,
 And birthrights to usurpers given;
 Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to feel,
 And witness woes thou couldst not heal!
 On thee relenting heaven bestows
 For honored life an honored close;
 And when revolves, in time's sure change,
 The hour of Germany's revenge,
 When, breathing fury for her sake,
 Some new Arminius shall awake,
 Her champion, ere he strike, shall come
 To whet his sword on BRUNSWICK'S tomb.

“Or of the Red-Cross hero teach,
 Dauntless in dungeon as on breach:
 Alike to him the sea, the shore,
 The brand, the bridle, or the oar;
 Alike to him the war that calls
 Its votaries to the shattered walls,
 Which the grim Turk besmeared with blood,
 Against the Invincible made good;
 Or that, whose thundering voice could wake

The silence of the polar lake,
When stubborn Russ, and metall'd Swede,
On the warped wave their death-game played;
Or that, where vengeance and affright
Howled round the father of the fight,
Who snatched on Alexandria's sand
The conqueror's wreath with dying hand.

“Or, if to touch such chord be thine,
Restore the ancient tragic line,
And emulate the notes that rung
From the wild harp which silent hung
By silver Avon's holy shore,
Till twice an hundred years rolled o'er;
When she, the bold Enchantress, came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame!
From the pale willow snatched the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deemed their own Shakspeare lived again.”—

Thy friendship thus thy judgment wronging
With praises not to me belonging,
In task more meet for mightiest powers,
Wouldst thou engage my thriftless hours.
But say, my Erskine, hast thou weighed
That secret power by all obeyed,
Which warps not less the passive mind,
Its source concealed or undefined;
Whether an impulse, that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours;
Or whether fitlier termed the sway
Of habit formed in early day?
Howe'er derived, its force confessed
Rules with despotic sway the breast,
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain.
Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
He seeks not eager to inhale

The freshness of the mountain gale
Content to rear his whitened wall
Beside the dank and dull canal?
He'll say, from youth he loved to see
The white sail gliding by the tree.
Or see yon weather-beaten hind,
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tattered plaid and rugged cheek
His northern clime and kindred speak;
Through England's laughing meads he goes,
And England's wealth around him flows:
Ask if it would content him well,
At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between?
No! not for these will he exchange
His dark Lochaber's boundless range,
Nor for fair Devon's meads forsake
Bennevis gray and Garry's lake.

Thus, while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charmed me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower
Which charmed my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sighed no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claimed homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,

And honey-suckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruined wall ;
I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all his round surveyed ;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power ;
And marvelled as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurred their horse
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, filled the hall
With revel, wassail-rout, and brawl.—
Methought that still with tramp and clang
The gateway's broken arches rang ;
Methought grim features, seamed with scars,
Glared through the windows' rusty bars.
And ever, by the winter-hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' sleights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms ;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold ;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretched at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war displayed ;
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scattered Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace,
Anew, each kind, familiar face,
That brightened at our evening fire ;
From the thatched mansion's gray-haired Sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood ;
Whose eye in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Showed what in youth its glance had been :

Whose doom discording neighbors sought,
 Content with equity unbought;
 To him the venerable Priest,
 Our frequent and familiar guest,
 Whose life and manners well could paint
 Alike the student and the saint;
 Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
 With gambol rude and timeles joke:
 For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
 A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child;
 But half a plague, and half a jest,
 Was still endured, beloved, carest.

From me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
 The classic poet's well-conn'd task?
 Nay, Erskine, nay—on the wild hill
 Let the wild heathbell flourish still:
 Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
 But freely let the woodbine twine,
 And leave untrimmed the eglantine;
 Nay, my friend, nay—since oft thy praise
 Hath given fresh vigor to my lays,
 Since oft thy judgment could refine
 My flattened thought, or cumbrous line,
 Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
 And in the minstrel spare the friend.
 Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,
 Flow forth, flow unrestrained, my Tale!



CANTO THIRD.

The Hostel, or Inn.

I.

THE livelong day Lord Marmion rode:
 The mountain path the Palmer showed;
 By glen and streamlet winded still,
 Where stunted birches hid the rill.

They might not choose the lowland road,
For the Merse forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
Had scarcely failed to bar their way.
Oft on the trampling band, from crown
Of some tall cliff, the deer looked down;
On wing of jet, from his repose
In the deep heath, the black-cock rose;
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow;
And when the stony path began,
By which the naked peak they wan,
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
The noon had long been passed before
They gained the height of Lammermoor.
Thence winding down the northern way,
Before them, at the close of day,
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn* seemed large, though rude,
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train.
Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
With jingling spurs the courtyard rung;

* If the Scottish inns were not good, it was not for want of encouragement from the legislature; who, so early as the reign of James I., not only enacted, that in all boroughs and fairs there be hostellaries, having stables and chambers, and provision for man and horse, but, by another statute, ordained, that no man, travelling on horse or foot, should presume to lodge anywhere except in these hostellaries; and that no person, save innkeepers, should receive such travellers, under the penalty of forty shillings, for exercising such hospitality.

They bind their horses to the stall,
 For forage, food, and firing call,
 And various clamor fills the hall:
 Weighing the labor with the cost,
 Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III.

Soon, by the chimney's merry blaze,
 Through the rude hostel might you gaze;
 Might see where, in dark nook aloof,
 The rafters of the sooty roof
 Bore wealth of winter cheer;
 Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
 And gammons of the tusky boar,
 And savory haunch of deer.
 The chimney arch projected wide;
 Above, around it, and beside,
 Were tools for housewives' hand:
 Nor wanted, in that martial day,
 The implements of Scottish fray,
 The buckler, lance, and brand.
 Beneath its shade, the place of state,
 On oaken settle Marmion sate,
 And viewed around the blazing hearth.
 His followers mix in noisy mirth,
 Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
 From ancient vessels ranged aside,
 Full actively their host supplied.

IV.

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
 And laughter theirs at little jest;
 And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid,
 And mingle in the mirth they made;
 For though, with men of high degree,
 The proudest of the proud was he,
 Yet, trained in camps, he knew the art
 To win the soldier's hardy heart.
 They love a captain to obey,
 Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;
 With open hand, and brow as free,
 Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
 Ever the first to scale a tower,

As venturous in a lady's bower :—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood ;
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fixed on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell ;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.

VI.

By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud ;
For still, as squire and archer stared
On that dark face and matted beard,
Their glee and game declined.
All gazed at length in silence drear,
Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
Thus whispered forth his mind :—
“ Saint Mary ! saw'st thou e'er such sight ?
How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
Whene'er the firebrand's fickle light
Glances beneath his cowl !
Full on our Lord he sets his eye ;
For his best palfrey, would not I
Endure that sullen scowl.”—

VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
Which thus had quelled their hearts, who saw
The ever-varying fire-light show
That figure stern and face of woe,
Now called upon a squire :—
“ Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
To speed the lingering night away ?
We slumber by the fire.”—

VIII.

"So please you," thus the youth rejoined,
 "Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
 Ill may we hope to please your ear,
 Accustomed Constant's strains to hear.
 The harp full deftly can he strike,
 And wake the lover's lute alike ;
 To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
 Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush ;
 No nightingale her love-lorn tune
 More sweetly warbles to the moon.
 Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
 Detains from us his melody,
 Lavished on rocks, and billows stern,
 Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
 Now must I venture as I may,
 To sing his favorite roundelay."—

IX.

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
 The air he chose was wild and sad ;
 Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
 Rise from the busy harvest band,
 When falls before the mountaineer,
 On lowland plains, the ripened ear.
 Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
 Now a wild chorus swells the song :
 Oft have I listened and stood still,
 As it came softened up the hill,
 And deemed it the lament of men
 Who languished for their native glen ;
 And thought, how sad would be such sound,
 On Susquehanna's swampy ground,
 Kentucky's wood-encumbered brake,
 Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
 Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
 Recalled fair Scotland's hills again !

X.

SONG.

Where shall the lover rest,
 Whom the fates sever

From his true maiden's breast,
 Parted forever?
 Where, through groves deep and high,
 Sounds the far billow,
 Where early violets die,
 Under the willow.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
 Cool streams are laving;
 There, while the tempests sway,
 Scarce are boughs waving;
 There, thy rest shalt thou take,
 Parted forever,
 Never again to wake,
 Never, O never.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never.

XI.

Where shall the traitor rest,
 He, the deceiver,
 Who could win maiden's breast,
 Ruin, and leave her?
 In the lost battle,
 Borne down by the flying,
 Where mingles war's rattle,
 With groans of the dying.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
 O'er the false-hearted;
 His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
 Ere life be parted.
 Shame and dishonor sit
 By his grave ever;
 Blessing shall hallow it.—
 Never, O never.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never.

XII.

It ceased, the melancholy sound ;
 And silence sunk on all around.
 The air was sad ; but sadder still
 It fell on Marmion's ear,
 And plained as if disgrace and ill,
 And shameful death, were near.
 He drew his mantle past his face,
 Between it and the band,
 And rested with his head a space,
 Reclining on his hand.
 His thoughts I scan not ; but I ween,
 That, could their import have been seen,
 The meanest groom in all the hall,
 That e'er tied courser to a stall,
 Would scarce have wished to be their prey,
 For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

XIII.

High minds, of native pride and force,
 Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse !
 Fear, for their scourge, mean villains have,
 Thou art the torturer of the brave ;
 Yet fatal strength they boast, to steel
 Their minds to bear the wounds they feel ;
 Even while they writhe beneath the smart
 Of civil conflict in the heart.
 For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
 And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said :—
 “ Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
 Seemed in mine ear a death-peal rung,
 Such as in nunneries they toll
 For some departing sister's soul ?
 Say, what may this portend ?”
 Then first the Palmer silence broke,
 (The livelong day he had not spoke,)
 “ The death of a dear friend.”*

XIV.

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
 Ne'er changed in worst extremity ;

* Among other omens among the Scottish peasantry, is what is called

Marmion, whose soul could scantly brook,
 Even from his king, a haughty look;
 Whose accent of command controlled,
 In camps, the boldest of the bold—
 Thought, look, and utterance, failed him now,
 Fallen was his glance, and flushed his brow:

For either in the tone,
 Or something in the Palmer's look,
 So full upon his conscience strook,
 That answer he found none.
 Thus oft it haps, that when within
 They shrink at sense of secret sin,
 A feather daunts the brave:
 A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
 And proudest princes veil their eyes
 Before their meanest slave.

xv.

Well might he falter!—by his aid
 Was Constance Beverley betrayed.
 Not that he augured of the doom,
 Which on the living closed the tomb:
 But, tired to hear the desperate maid
 Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid;
 And wroth, because, in wild despair,
 She practised on the life of Clare;
 Its fugitive the Church he gave,
 Though not a victim, but a slave;
 And deemed restraint in convent strange
 Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge.
 Himself, proud Henry's favorite peer,
 Held Romish thunders idle fear,
 Secure his pardon he might hold,
 For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
 Thus judging, he gave secret way,
 When the stern priests surprised their prey.
 His train but deemed the favorite page
 Was left behind, to spare his age;
 Or other if they deemed, none dared
 To mutter what he thought and heard:

the 'dead-bell;' that tinkling in the ears which the country people regard as the secret intelligence of some friend's decease.

Woe to the vassal who durst pry
 Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

XVI.

His conscience slept—he deemed her well,
 And safe secured in distant cell;
 But wakened by her favorite lay,
 And that strange Palmer's boding say,
 That fell so ominous and drear,
 Full on the object of his fear,
 To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
 Dark tales of convent vengeance rose;
 And Constance, late betrayed and scorned,
 All lovely on his soul returned:
 Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
 She left her convent's peaceful wall,
 Crimsoned with shame, with terror mute,
 Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
 Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
 Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII.

“Alas!” he thought, “how changed that mien
 How changed these timid looks have been,
 Since years of guilt, and of disguise,
 Have steeled her brow, and armed her eyes!
 No more of virgin terror speaks
 The blood that mantles in her cheeks;
 Fierce, and unfeminine, are there,
 Frenzy for joy, for grief despair:
 And I the cause—for whom were given
 Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven!—
 Would,” thought he, as the picture grows,
 “I on its stalk had left the rose!
 Oh, why should man's success remove
 The very charms that wake his love!
 Her convent's peaceful solitude
 Is now a prison harsh and rude;
 And, pent within the narrow cell,
 How will her spirit chafe and swell!
 How brook the stern monastic laws!
 The penance how—and I the cause!
 Vigil and scourge—perchance even worse!”—

And twice he rose to cry "to horse!"
 And twice his sovereign's mandate came,
 Like damp upon a kindling flame;
 And twice he thought, "Gave I not charge
 She should be safe, though not at large?
 They durst not, for their island, shred
 One golden ringlet from her head."—

XVIII.

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
 Repentance and reviving love,
 Like whirlwinds, whose contending sway
 I've seen Loch Vennachar obey,
 Their host the Palmer's speech had heard,
 And, talkative, took up the word:—

 "Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray
 From Scotland's simple land away,
 To visit realms afar,
 Full often learn the art to know,
 Of future weal, or future woe,
 By word, or sign, or star;
 Yet might a knight his fortune hear,
 If, knight-like, he despises fear,
 Not far from hence;—if fathers old
 Aright our hamlet legend told."—
 These broken words the menials move,
 (For marvels still the vulgar love;)
 And, Marmion giving license cold,
 His tale the host thus gladly told.

XIX.

THE HOST'S TALE.

"A clerk could tell what years have flown
 Since Alexander filled our throne,
 (Third monarch of that warlike name,)
 And eke the time when here he came
 To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord:
 A braver never drew a sword;
 A wiser never, at the hour
 Of midnight, spoke the word of power,
 The same, whom ancient records call

The founder of the Goblin-Hall.*
 I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
 Gave you that cavern to survey.
 Of lofty roof, and ample size,
 Beneath the castle deep it lies:
 To hew the living rock profound,
 The floor to pave, the arch to round,
 There never toiled a mortal arm,
 It all was wrought by word and charm;
 And I have heard my grandsire say,
 That the wild clamor and affray
 Of those dread artisans of hell,
 Who labored under Hugo's spell,
 Sounded as loud as ocean's war,
 Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX.

“The king Lord Gifford's castle sought,
 Deep-laboring with uncertain thought:
 Even then he mustered all his host,
 To meet upon the western coast;
 For Norse and Danish galleys plied
 Their oars within the frith of Clyde.
 There floated Haco's banner trim,†
 Above Norweyan warriors grim,
 Savage of heart, and large of limb;
 Threatening both continent and isle,
 Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
 Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
 Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
 And tarried not his garb to change,
 But, in his wizard habit strange,‡

* A vaulted hall under the ancient castle of Gifford, or Yester (for it bears their name indifferently), the construction of which has, from a very remote period, been ascribed to magic.

† In 1263, Haco, king of Norway, came into the Frith of Clyde with a powerful armament, and made a descent at Largs, in Ayrshire. He was encountered and defeated, on the 2d October, by Alexander III. Haco retreated to Orkney, where he died soon after this disgrace.

‡ Magicians, as is well known, were very curious in the choice and form of their vestments. The particulars of Sir Hugo's dress are to be found in the Discourse concerning Devils and Spirits, annexed to REGINALD SCOTT'S *Discovery of Witchcraft*, edition 1665.

Came forth,—a quaint and fearful sight!
 His mantle lined with fox-skins white;
 His high and wrinkled forehead bore
 A pointed cap, such as of yore
 Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore;
 His shoes were marked with cross and spell;
 Upon his breast a pentacle;*
 His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
 Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
 Bore many a planetary sign,
 Combust, and retrograde, and trine;
 And in his hand he held prepared,
 A naked sword without a guard.

XXI.

“Dire dealings with the fiendish race
 Had marked strange lines upon his face;
 Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
 His eyesight dazzled seemed, and dim,
 As one unused to upper day;
 Even his own menials with dismay
 Beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly sire,
 In this unwonted wild attire;—
 Unwonted, for traditions run,
 He seldom thus beheld the sun.
 ‘I know,’ he said,—his voice was hoarse,
 And broken seemed its hollow force,—
 ‘I know the cause, although untold,
 Why the king seeks his vassal's hold:
 Vainly from me my liege would know
 His kingdom's future weal or woe:
 But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
 His courage may do more than art.

XXII.

“Of middle air the demons proud,
 Who ride upon the racking cloud,
 Can read, in fixed or wandering star,
 The issue of events afar;

* A pentacle is a piece of fine linen, folded with five corners, according to the five senses, and suitably inscribed with characters. Thus the magician extends towards the spirits which he invokes, when they are stubborn and rebellious.

But still their sullen aid withhold,
 Save when by mightier force controlled.
 Such late I summoned to my hall;
 And though so potent was the call,
 That scarce the deepest nook of hell
 I deemed a refuge from the spell,
 Yet, obstinate in silence still,
 The haughty demon mocks my skill.
 But thou,—who little know'st thy might,
 As born upon that blessed night*
 When yawning graves, and dying groan,
 Proclaimed hell's empire overthrown,—
 With untaught valor shalt compel
 Response denied to magic spell.'—
 'Gramercy,' quoth our monarch free,
 'Place him but front to front with me,
 And, by this good and honored brand,
 The gift of Cœur-de-Lion's hand,
 Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,
 The demon shall a buffet bide.'—
 His bearing bold the wizard viewed,
 And thus, well pleased, his speech renewed:—
 'There spoke the blood of Malcolm!—mark:
 Forth pacing hence, at midnight dark,
 The rampart seek, whose circling crown
 Crests the ascent of yonder down;
 A southern entrance shalt thou find;
 There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
 And trust thine elfin foe to see,
 In guise of thy worst enemy:
 Couch then thy lance, and spur thy steed—
 Upon him! and Saint George to speed!
 If he go down, thou soon shalt know,
 Whate'er these airy sprites can show;—
 If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
 I am no warrant for thy life.'—

XXIII.

"Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
 Alone, and armed, rode forth the king

* It is a popular article of faith, that those who are born on Christmas, or Good-Friday, have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them.

To that old camp's deserted round:—
Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound,
Left hand the town,—the Pictish race
The trench, long since, in blood did trace;
The moor around is brown and bare,
The space within is green and fair.
The spot our village children know,
For there the earliest wild-flowers grow;
But woe betide the wandering wight
That treads its circle in the night!
The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
Gives ample space for full career;
Opposed to the four points of heaven,
By four deep gaps is entrance given.
The southernmost our monarch past,
Halted, and blew a gallant blast;
And on the north, within the ring,
Appeared the form of England's king;
Who then, a thousand leagues afar,
In Palestine waged holy war:
Yet arms like England's did he wield,
Alike the leopards in the shield,
Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
The rider's length of limb the same:
Long afterwards did Scotland know,
Fell Edward* was her deadliest foe.

XXIV.

“The vision made our monarch start,
But soon he manned his noble heart,
And in the first career they ran,
The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man;
Yet did a splinter of his lance
Through Alexander's visor glance,
And razed the skin—a puny wound.
The king, light leaping to the ground
With naked blade his phantom foe
Compelled the future war to show.
Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
Where still gigantic bones remain,
Memorial of the Danish war;

* Edward I., surnamed Longshanks.

Himself he saw, amid the field,
 On high his brandished war-axe wield,
 And strike proud Haco from his car,
 While all around the shadowy kings
 Denmark's grim ravens cowered their wings.
 'Tis said that in that awful night,
 Remoter visions met his sight,
 Foreshowing future conquests far,
 When our sons' sons wage northern war;
 A royal city, tower and spire,
 Reddened the midnight sky with fire;
 And shouting crews her navy bore,
 Triumphant, to the victor shore.
 Such signs may learned clerks explain,
 They pass the wit of simple swain.

XXV.

"The joyful king turned home again,
 Headed his host, and quelled the Dane;
 But yearly, when returned the night
 Of his strange combat with the sprite,
 His wound must bleed and smart;
 Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
 'Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
 The penance of your start.'
 Long since, beneath Dunfermline's nave,
 King Alexander fills his grave,
 Our Lady give him rest!
 Yet still the nightly spear and shield
 The elfin warrior doth wield,
 Upon the brown hill's breast;
 And many a knight hath proved his chance,
 In the charmed ring to break a lance,
 But all have foully sped;
 Save two, as legends tell, and they
 Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert Hay.—
 Gentles, my tale is said."—

XXVI.

The quaighs* were deep, the liquor strong,
 And on the tale the yeoman-throng

* A wooden cup, composed of staves hooped together.

Had made a comment sage and long,
 But Marmion gave a sign;
 And, with their lord, the squires retire;
 The rest, around the hostel fire,
 Their drowsy limbs recline;
 For pillow, underneath each head,
 The quiver and the targe were laid.
 Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
 Oppressed with toil and ale, they snore.
 The dying flame, in fitful change,
 Threw on the group its shadows strange.

XXVII.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
 Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay;
 Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
 The foldings of his mantle green:
 Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
 Of sport by thicket, or by stream,
 Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
 Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
 A cautious tread his slumber broke,
 And, close beside him, when he woke,
 In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
 Stood a tall form, with nodding plume;
 But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
 His master Marmion's voice he knew.

XXVIII.

—"Fitz-Eustace! rise—I cannot rest;
 Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
 And graver thoughts have chafed my mood:
 The air must cool my feverish blood;
 And fain would I ride forth, to see
 The scene of elfin chivalry.
 Arise, and saddle me my steed;
 And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
 Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves
 I would not that the prating knaves
 Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
 That I could credit such a tale."—
 Then softly down the steps they slid,
 Eustace the stable door undid,

And, darkling, Marmion's steed arrayed,
While, whispering, thus the Baron said:—

XXIX.

“Didst never, good my youth, hear tell,
That in the hour when I was born,
St. George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree,
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe!
Blithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite:—
Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring.”
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX.

Fitz-Eustace followed him abroad,
And marked him pace the village road.
And listened to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seemed, in the squire's eyes,
That one, so wary held, and wise,—
Of whom 'twas said he scarce received
For gospel, what the church believed,—
Should, stirred by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Arrayed in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
That passions, in contending flow,
Unfix the strongest mind;
Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
We welcome fond credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
 But, patient, waited till he heard,
 At distance pricked to utmost speed,
 The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
 Come town-ward rushing on:
 First, dead, as if on turf it trod,
 Then, clattering on the village road,—
 In other pace than forth he yode,*

Returned Lord Marmion.

Down hastily he sprung from selle,
 And, in his haste, wellnigh he fell;
 To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
 And spoke no word as he withdrew;
 But yet the moonlight did betray,
 The falcon crest was soiled with clay;
 And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
 By stains upon the charger's knee,
 And his left side, that on the moor
 He had not kept his footing sure.
 Long musing on these wondrous signs,
 At length to rest the squire reclines,
 Broken and short; for still, between,
 Would dreams of terror intervene:
 Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
 The first notes of the morning lark.

 INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FOURTH.

To JAMES SKENE, Esq.

Ashestiel, Eltrick Forest.

AN ancient minstrel sagely said,
 "Where is the life which late we led?"
 That motley clown in Arden wood,
 Whom humorous Jacques with envy viewed,
 Not even that clown could amplify,

* Used by old Poets for *went*.

On this trite text, so long as I.
 Eleven years we now may tell,
 Since we have known each other well;
 Since, riding side by side, our hand
 First drew the voluntary brand;
 And sure, through many a varied scene,
 Unkindness never came between.
 Away these winged years have flown,
 To join the mass of ages gone;
 And though deep marked, like all below,
 With checkered shades of joy and woe;
 Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
 Marked cities lost, and empires changed,
 While, here, at home, my narrower ken
 Somewhat of manners saw, and men;
 Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears,
 Fevered the progress of these years,
 Yet now, days, weeks, and months, but seem
 The recollection of a dream,
 So still we glide down to the sea
 Of fathomless eternity.

Even now, it scarcely seems a day,
 Since first I tuned this idle lay;
 A task so often thrown aside,
 When leisure graver cares denied,
 That now, November's dreary gale,
 Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
 That same November gale once more
 Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore;
 Their vexed boughs streaming to the sky,
 Once more our naked birches sigh;
 And Blackhouse heights, and Ettrick Pen,
 Have donned their wintry shrouds again;
 And mountain dark, and flooded mead,
 Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
 Earlier than wont along the sky,
 Mixed with the rack, the snow-mists fly:
 The shepherd, who, in summer sun,
 Has something of our envy won,
 As thou with pencil, I with pen,
 The features traced of hill and glen;
 He who, outstretched the livelong day,

At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
Viewed the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumbered o'er his tattered book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessened tide ;---
At midnight now the snowy plain
Finds sterner labor for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless sun,
Through heavy vapors dank and dun ;
When the tired ploughman, dry and warm,
Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
Hurling the hail, and sleeted rain,
Against the casement's tinkling pane ;
The sounds that drive wild deer, and fox,
To shelter in the brake and rocks,
Are warnings which the shepherd ask
To dismal and to dangerous task.
Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
The blast may sink in mellowing rain ;
Till, dark above, and white below,
Decided drives the flaky snow,
And forth the hardy swain must go.
Long, with dejected look and whine,
To leave the hearth his dogs repine ;
Whistling, and cheering them to aid,
Around his back he wreathes the plaid :
His flock he gathers, and he guides
To open downs, and mountain sides,
Where, fiercest though the tempest blow,
Least deeply lies the drift below.
The blast, that whistles o'er the fells,
Stiffens his locks to icicles ;
Oft he looks back, while, streaming far,
His cottage window seems a star,
Loses its feeble gleam, and then
Turns patient to the blast again,
And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep :
If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
Benumbing death is in the gale ;
His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
Close to the hut, no more his own.

Close to the aid he sought in vain,
 The morn may find the stiffened swain :
 His widow sees, at dawning pale,
 His orphans raise their feeble wail ;
 And, close beside him, in the snow,
 Poor Yarrow, partner of their woe,
 Couches upon his master's breast,
 And licks his cheek, to break his rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
 His healthy fare, his rural cot,
 His summer couch by greenwood tree,
 His rustic kirk's* loud revelry,
 His native hill-notes, tuned on high,
 To Marion of the blithesome eye ;
 His crook, his scrip, his oaten reed,
 And all Arcadia's golden creed ?

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
 Of human life the varying scene ?
 Our youthful summer oft we see
 Dance by on wings of game and glee,
 While the dark storm reserves its rage,
 Against the winter of our age :
 As he, the ancient chief of Troy,
 His manhood spent in peace and joy ;
 But Grecian fires, and loud alarms,
 Called ancient Priam forth to arms.
 Then happy those,—since each must drain
 His share of pleasure, share of pain,—
 Then happy those, beloved of heaven,
 To whom the mingled cup is given ;
 Whose lenient sorrows find relief,
 Whose joys are chastened by their grief.
 And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
 When thou of late wert doomed to twine,—
 Just when thy bridal hour was by,—
 The cypress with the myrtle tie ;
 Just on thy bride her Sire had smiled,
 And blessed the union of his child,
 When love must change its joyous cheer,
 And wipe affection's filial tear.
 Nor did the actions next his end,

* The Scottish harvest-home.

Speak more the father than the friend :
 Scarce had lamented Forbes paid
 The tribute to his Minstrel's shade ;*
 The tale of friendship scarce was told,
 Ere the narrator's heart was cold.
 Far may we search before we find
 A heart so manly and so kind.
 But not around his honored urn,
 Shall friends alone and kindred mourn ;
 The thousand eyes his care had dried,
 Pour at his name a bitter tide ;
 And frequent falls the grateful dew,
 For benefits the world ne'er knew.
 If mortal charity dare claim
 The Almighty's attributed name,
 Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
 "The widow's shield, the orphan's stay."
 Nor, though it wake thy sorrow, deem
 My verse intrudes on this sad theme ;
 For sacred was the pen that wrote,
 "Thy father's friend forget thou not ;"
 And grateful title may I plead,
 For many a kindly word and deed,
 To bring my tribute to his grave :—
 'Tis little—but 'tis all I have.

To thee, perchance, this rambling strain
 Recalls our summer walks again ;
 When doing naught,—and, to speak true,
 Not anxious to find aught to do,—
 The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
 While oft our talk its topic changed,
 And desultory, as our way,
 Ranged unconfined from grave to gay.
 Even when it flagged, as oft will chance,
 No effort made to break its trance,
 We could right pleasantly pursue

* Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Baronet; unequalled, perhaps, in the degree of individual affection entertained for him by his friends, as well as in the general respect and esteem of Scotland at large. His "Life of Beattie," whom he befriended and patronized in life, as well as celebrated after his decease, was not long published, before the benevolent and affectionate biographer was called to follow the subject of his narrative.

Our sports in social silence too.
 Thou gravely laboring to portray
 The blighted oak's fantastic spray ;
 I spelling o'er, with much delight,
 The legend of that antique knight,
 Tirante by name, ycleped the White.
 At either's feet a trusty squire,
 Pandour and Camp, with eyes of fire,
 Jealous, each other's motions viewed,
 And scarce suppressed their ancient feud.
 The laverock whistled from the cloud ;
 The stream was lively, but not loud ;
 From the white-thorn the May-flower shed
 Its dewy fragrance round our head :
 Not Ariel lived more merrily
 Under the blossomed bough, than we.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,
 When Winter stript the summer's bowers ;
 Careless we heard, what now I hear,
 The wild blast sighing deep and drear,
 When fires were bright, and lamps beamed gay,
 And ladies tuned the lovely lay ;
 And he was held a laggard soul,
 Who shunned to quaff the sparkling bowl.
 Then he, whose absence we deplore,
 Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
 The longer missed, bewailed the more ;
 And thou, and I, and dear-loved R——,
 And one whose name I may not say,—
 For not Mimosa's tender tree
 Shrinks sooner from the touch than he, --
 In merry chorus well combined,
 With laughter drowned the whistling wind.
 Mirth was within ; and Care without
 Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.
 Not but amid the buxom scene
 Some grave discourse might intervene—
 Of the good horse that bore him best,
 His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest :
 For, like mad Tom's,* our chiefest care,
 Was horse to ride, and weapon wear.

* See *King Lear*.

Such nights we've had; and, though the game
 Of manhood be more sober tame,
 And though the field-day, or the drill,
 Seem less important now—yet still
 Such may we hope to share again.
 The sprightly thought inspires my strain;
 And mark, how like a horseman true,
 Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.



CANTO FOURTH.

The Camp.

I.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
 The first notes of the merry lark.
 The lark sung shrill, the cock he crew,
 And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
 And, with their light and lively call,
 Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
 Whistling they came, and free of heart;
 But soon their mood was changed:
 Complaint was heard on every part,
 Of something disarranged.
 Some clamored loud for armor lost;
 Some brawled and wrangled with the host;
 "By Becket's bones," cried one, "I fear,
 That some false Scot has stolen my spear!"—
 Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
 Found his steed wet with sweat and mire;
 Although the rated horse-boy sware,
 Last night he dressed him sleek and fair.
 While chafed the impatient squire like thunder
 Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder,—
 "Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
 Bevis lies dying in his stall:
 To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
 O! the good steed he loves so well?"

Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
 The charger panting on his straw ;
 Till one, who would seem wisest, cried,—
 “ What else but evil could betide,
 With that cursed Palmer for our guide?
 Better we had through mire and bush
 Been lanthorn-led by Friar Rush.”*

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guessed,
 Nor wholly understood,
 His comrades' clamorous plaints suppressed ;
 He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
 Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
 And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
 And did his tale display
 Simply, as if he knew of naught
 To cause such disarray.
 Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
 Nor marvelled at the wonders told,—
 Passed them as accidents of course,
 And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
 Had reckoned with their Scottish host ;
 And, as the charge he cast and paid,
 “ Ill thou deserv'st thy hire,” he said ;
 “ Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight ?
 Fairies have ridden him all the night,
 And left him in a foam !
 I trust, that soon a conjuring band,
 With English cross and blazing brand,
 Shall drive the devils from this land,
 To their infernal home :
 For in this haunted den, I trow,
 All night they trampled to and fro.”—
 The laughing host looked on the hire,—

* This personage was a sort of Robin Goodfellow, and Jack o' Lanthorn
 it is in allusion to this mischievous demon that Milton's clown speaks,—

“ She was pinched, and pulled, she said,
 And he by *friar's lanthorn* led.”

“Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
 And if thou com’st among the rest,
 With Scottish broad-sword to be blest,
 Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
 And short the pang to undergo.”—
 Here stayed their talk,—for Marmion
 Gave now the signal to set on.
 The Palmer showing forth the way,
 They journeyed all the morning day.

IV.

The green-sward way was smooth and good,
 Through Humble’s and through Saltoun’s wood;
 A forest glade, which, varying still,
 Here gave a view of dale and hill;
 There narrower closed, till overhead
 A vaulted screen the branches made.
 “A pleasant path,” Fitz-Eustace said;
 “Such as where errant knights might see
 Adventures of high chivalry;
 Might meet some damsel flying fast,
 With hair unbound, and looks aghast;
 And smooth and level course were here,
 In her defence to break a spear.
 Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
 And oft, in such, the story tells,
 The damsel kind, from danger freed,
 Did grateful pay her champion’s meed.”—
 He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion’s mind:
 Perchance to show his lore designed;
 For Eustace much had pored
 Upon a huge romantic tome,
 In the hall-window of his home,
 Imprinted at the antique dome
 Of Caxton or De Worde.
 Therefore he spoke,—but spoke in vain,
 For Marmion answered naught again.

V.

Now sudden distant trumpets shrill,
 In notes prolonged by wood and hill,
 Were heard to echo far;
 Each ready archer grasped his bow,

But by the flourish soon they know,
 They breathed no point of war.
 Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
 Lord Marmion's order speeds the band,
 Some opener ground to gain;
 And scarce a furlong had they rode,
 When thinner trees, receding, showed
 A little woodland plain.
 Just in that advantageous glade,
 The halting troop a line had made,
 As forth from the opposing shade
 Issued a gallant train.

VI.

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
 So late the forest echoes rang;
 On prancing steeds they forward pressed,
 With scarlet mantle, azure vest;
 Each at his trump a banner wore,
 Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore.
 Heralds and pursuivants, by name
 Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Rothsay, came,
 In painted tabards, proudly showing
 Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing,
 Attendant on a King-at-arms,
 Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
 That feudal strife had often quelled,
 When wildest its alarms.

VII.

He was a man of middle age;
 In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
 As on king's errand come;
 But in the glances of his eye,
 A penetrating, keen, and sly
 Expression found its home;
 The flash of that satiric rage,
 Which, bursting on the early stage,
 Branded the vices of the age,
 And broke the keys of Rome.
 On milk-white palfrey forth he paced;
 His cap of maintenance was graced
 With the proud heron-plume.

From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast,
Silk housings swept the ground,
With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
Embroidered round and round.
The double tressure might you see,
First by Achaius borne,
The thistle, and the fleur-de-lis,
And gallant unicorn.
So bright the king's armorial coat,
That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colors, blazoned brave,
The Lion, which his title gave.
A train, which well beseeemed his state,
But all unarmed, around him wait.
Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse has charms,
Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-arms!*

VIII.

Down from his horse did Marmion spring,
Soon as he saw the Lion-King;
For well the stately baron knew,
To him such courtesy was due,
Whom royal James himself had crowned,
And on his temples placed the round
Of Scotland's ancient diadem;
And wet his brow with hallowed wine,
And on his finger given to shine
The emblematic gem.
Their mutual greetings duly made,
The Lion thus his message said:—
“Though Scotland's King hath deeply swore,
Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
And strictly hath forbid resort
From England to his royal court;

* Sir David Lindesay was well known for his early efforts in favor of the reformed doctrines. It was often an office imposed on the Lion King-at-arms to receive foreign ambassadors. The office of heralds, in feudal times, being held of the utmost importance, the inauguration of the Kings-at-arms, who presided over their colleges, was proportionately solemn. In fact, it was the mimicry of a royal coronation, except that the unction was made with wine instead of oil.

Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name,
 And honors much his warlike fame,
 My liege hath deemed it shame, and lack
 Of courtesy, to turn him back ;
 And, by his order, I, your guide,
 Must lodging fit and fair provide,
 Till finds King James meet time to see
 The flower of English chivalry."—

IX.

Though inly chafed at this delay,
 Lord Marmion bears it as he may.
 The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
 Beholding thus his place supplied,
 Sought to take leave in vain :
 Strict was the Lion-King's command,
 That none, who rode in Marmion's band,
 Should sever from the train :
 "England has here enow of spies
 In Lady Heron's witching eyes ;"
 To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
 But fair pretext to Marmion made.
 The right-hand path they now decline,
 And trace against the stream the Tyne.

X.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
 Where Crichtoun-Castle crowns the bank ;*
 For there the Lion's care assigned
 A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
 That Castle rises on the steep
 Of the green vale of Tyne ;
 And far beneath, where slow they creep
 From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
 Where alders moist, and willows weep,
 You hear her streams repine.
 The towers in different ages rose ;
 Their various architecture shows
 The builders' various hands ;
 A mighty mass, that could oppose,

* A large ruinous castle on the banks of the Tyne, about seven miles from Edinburgh.

When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
The vengeful Douglas bands.

XI.

Crichtoun! though now thy miry court
But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
Thy turrets rude and tottered Keep,
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced within thy fort,
Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
Scutcheons of honor, or pretence,
Quartered in old armorial sort,
Remains of rude magnificence:
Nor wholly yet hath time defaced
Thy lordly gallery fair;
Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
Adorn thy ruined stair.
Still rises unimpaired, below,
The courtyard's graceful portico;
Above its cornice, row and row
Of fair hewn facets richly show
Their pointed diamond form,
Though there but houseless cattle go
To shield them from the storm.
And, shuddering, still may we explore,
Where oft whilom were captives pent,
The darkness of thy Massy More;
Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
May trace, in undulating line,
The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII.

Another aspect Crichtoun showed,
As through its portal Marmion rode.
But yet 'twas melancholy state
Received him at the outer gate;
For none were in the castle then,
But women, boys, or aged men.
With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame,
To welcome noble Marmion, came;
Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
Proffered the Baron's rein to hold;

For each man, that could draw a sword,
 Had marched that morning with their lord,
 Earl Adam Hepburn,*—he who died
 On Flodden, by his sovereign's side.
 Long may his Lady look in vain!
 She ne'er shall see his gallant train
 Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.
 'Twas a brave race, before the name
 Of hated Bothwell stained their fame.

XIII.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
 With every rite that honor claims,
 Attended as the king's own guest,—
 Such the command of royal James;
 Who marshalled then his land's array,
 Upon the Borough moor that lay.
 Perchance he would not foeman's eye
 Upon his gathering hosts should pry,
 Till full prepared was every band
 To march against the English land.
 Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
 Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit;
 And in his turn, he knew to prize
 Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and wise,—
 Trained in the lore of Rome and Greece,
 And policies of war and peace.

XIV.

It chanced, as fell the second night,
 That on the battlements they walked,
 And, by the slowly fading light,
 Of varying topics talked;
 And, unaware, the Herald-bard
 Said Marmion might his toil have spared,
 In travelling so far;
 For that a messenger from heaven
 In vain to James had counsel given
 Against the English war;†

* He was the second Earl of Bothwell, and fell in the field of Flodden, where he distinguished himself by a furious attempt to retrieve the day.

† This story is told by Pitscottie with characteristic simplicity. Buchanan, in more elegant, though not more impressive language, tells the same story, and

And, closer questioned, thus he told
A tale, which chronicles of old
In Scottish story have enrolled:—

XV.

SIR DAVID LINDESAY'S TALE.

“Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland, far beyond compare
Linlithgow is excelling;
And in its park, in jovial June,
How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
How blithe the blackbird's lay!
The wild-buck bells* from ferny brake,
The coot dives merry on the lake,
The saddest heart might pleasure take
To see all nature gay.
But June is to our Sovereign dear
The heaviest month in all the year: †
Too well his cause of grief you know,—
June saw his father's overthrow.
Woe to the traitors, who could bring
The princely boy against his King!
Still in his conscience burns the sting.
In offices as strict as Lent,
King James's June is ever spent.

XVI.

“When last this ruthful month was come,
And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The King, as wont, was praying;

quotes the personal information of our Sir David Lindesay. The king's throne, in St. Katharine's aisle, which he had constructed for himself, with twelve stalls for the Knights Companions of the Order of the Thistle, is still-shown as the place where the apparition was seen.

* *Bell* seems to be an abbreviation of *bellow*. A gentle knight in the reign of Henry VIII., Sir Thomas Wortley, built Wantley Lodge, in Wancliffe Forest, for the pleasure (as an ancient inscription testifies) of “listening to the hart's *bell*.”

† The rebellion against James III. was signaled by the cruel circumstance of his son's presence in the hostile army. When the king saw his own banner displayed against him, and his son in the faction of his enemies, he lost the little courage he ever possessed, fled out of the field, fell from his horse as it started at a woman and water-pitcher, and was slain it is not well understood by whom.

While for his royal father's soul
 The chanters sung, the bells did toll,
 The Bishop mass was saying—
 For now the year brought round again
 The day the luckless king was slain—
 In Katharine's aisle the monarch knelt,
 With sackcloth-shirt, and iron belt,
 And eyes with sorrow streaming;
 Around him, in their stalls of state,
 The Thistle's Knight Companions sate,
 Their banners o'er them beaming.
 I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
 Bedeafened with the jangling knell,
 Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
 Through the stained casement gleaming;
 But, while I marked what next befell,
 It seemed as I were dreaming.
 Stepped from the crowd a ghostly wight,
 In azure gown, with cincture white;
 His forehead bald, his head was bare,
 Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
 Now, mock me not, when, good my Lord,
 I pledge to you my knightly word,
 That, when I saw his placid grace,
 His simple majesty of face,
 His solemn bearing, and his pace
 So stately gliding on,—
 Seemed to me ne'er did limner paint
 So just an image of the Saint,
 Who propped the virgin in her faint,—
 The loved Apostle John.

XVII.

“He stepped before the Monarch's chair,
 And stood with rustic plainness there,
 And little reverence made;
 Nor head, nor body, bowed nor bent,
 But on the desk his arm he leant,
 And words like these he said,
 In a low voice,—but never tone
 So thrilled through vein, and nerve, and bone:—
 ‘My mother sent me from afar,
 Sir King, to warn thee not to war,—

Woe waits on thine array ;
If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
James Stuart, doubly warned, beware :
God keep thee as he may !"—
The wondering Monarch seemed to seek
For answer, and found none ;
And when he raised his head to speak,
The monitor was gone.
The Marshal and myself had cast
To stop him as he outward past ;
But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
He vanished from our eyes,
Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
That glances but, and dies."—

XVIII.

While Lindesay told this marvel strange,
The twilight was so pale,
He marked not Marmion's color change,
While listening to the tale :
But, after a suspended pause,
The Baron spoke :—"Of Nature's laws,
So strong I hold the force,
That never superhuman cause
Could e'er control their course ;
And, three days since, had judged your aim
Was but to make your guest your game.
But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
What much has changed my skeptic creed,
And made me credit aught."—He staid,
And seemed to wish his words unsaid ;
But, by that strong emotion pressed,
Which prompts us to unload our breast,
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Naught of the Palmer says he there,
And naught of Constance, or of Clare :
The thoughts, which broke his sleep, he seems
To mention but as feverish dreams.

XIX.

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
 My burning limbs, and couched my head:
 Fantastic thoughts returned;
 And, by their wild dominion led,
 My heart within me burned.
 So sore was the delirious goad,
 I took my steed, and forth I rode,
 And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
 Soon reached the camp upon the wold.
 The southern entrance I passed through,
 And halted, and my bugle blew.
 Methought an answer met my ear,—
 Yet was the blast so low and drear,
 So hollow, and so faintly blown,
 It might be echo of my own.

XX.

"Thus judging, for a little space
 I listened, ere I left the place;
 But scarce could trust my eyes,
 Nor yet can think they served me true,
 When sudden in the ring I view,
 In form distinct of shape and hue,
 A mounted champion rise.—
 I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day
 In single fight, and mixed affray,
 And ever, I myself may say,
 Have borne me as a knight;
 But when this unexpected foe
 Seemed starting from the gulf below,—
 I care not though the truth I show,—
 I trembled with affright;
 And as I placed in rest my spear,
 My hand so shook for very fear,
 I scarce could couch it right.

XXI.

"Why need my tongue the issue tell?
 We ran our course,—my charger fell:—
 What could he 'gainst the shock of hell?—
 I rolled upon the plain.

High o'er my head, with threatening hand,—
 The spectre shook his naked brand,—
 Yet did the worst remain ;
 My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
 Not opening hell itself could blast
 Their sight, like what I saw !
 Full on his face the moonbeam strook,—
 A face could never be mistook !
 I knew the stern vindictive look,
 And held my breath for awe.
 I saw the face of one who, fled
 To foreign climes, has long been dead.—
 I well believe the last ;
 For ne'er, from visor raised, did stare
 A human warrior, with a glare
 So grimly and so ghast.
 Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade ;
 But when to good Saint George I prayed,
 (The first time e'er I asked his aid,)
 He plunged it in the sheath ;
 And, on his courser mounting light,
 He seemed to vanish from my sight :
 The moonbeam drooped, and deepest night
 Sunk down upon the heath.—
 'Twere long to tell what cause I have
 To know his face, that met me there,
 Called by his hatred from the grave,
 To cumber upper air :
 Dead or alive, good cause had he
 To be my mortal enemy.”—

XXII.

Marvelled Sir David of the Mount ;
 Then, learned in story, 'gan recount
 Such chance had hap'd of old,
 When once, near Norham, there did fight
 A spectre fell, of fiendish might,
 In likeness of a Scottish knight,
 With Brian Bulmer bold,
 And trained him nigh to disallow
 The aid of his baptismal vow.
 “ And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
 With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,

And fingers red with gore,
 Is seen in Rothiemurcus glade,
 Or where the sable pine-trees shade
 Dark Tomantoul, and Auchnaslaid,
 Dromouchty, or Glenmore.
 And yet, whate'er such legends say,
 Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
 On mountain, moor, or plain,
 Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
 True son of chivalry should hold
 These midnight terrors vain;
 For seldom have such spirits power
 To harm, save in the evil hour,
 When guilt we meditate within,
 Or harbor unrepented sin."—
 Lord Marmion turned him half aside,
 And twice to clear his voice he tried,
 Then pressed Sir David's hand,—
 But naught, at length, in answer said;
 And here their farther converse staid,
 Each ordering that his band
 Should bowne them with the rising day,
 To Scotland's camp to take their way,—
 Such was the King's command.

XXIII.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
 And I could trace each step they trode;
 Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone
 Lies on the path to me unknown.
 Much might it boast of storied lore;
 But, passing such digression o'er,
 Suffice it, that their route was laid
 Across the furzy hills of Braid.
 They passed the glen and scanty rill,
 And climbed the opposing bank, until
 They gained the top of Blackford Hill.

XXIV.

Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
 Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
 A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
 Or listed, as I lay at rest,

While rose, on breezes thin,
 The murmur of the city crowd,
 And, from his steeple jangling loud,
 Saint Giles's mingling din.
 Now, from the summit to the plain,
 Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
 And o'er the landscape as I look,
 Naught do I see unchanged remain,
 Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook
 To me they make a heavy moan,
 Of early friendships past and gone.

XXV.

But different far the change has been,
 Since Marmion, from the crown
 Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
 Upon the bent so brown:
 Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
 Spread all the Borough-moor below,*
 Upland, and dale, and down:—
 A thousand did I say? I ween,
 Thousands on thousands there were seen,
 That checkered all the heath between
 The streamlet and the town;
 In crossing ranks extending far,
 Forming a camp irregular;
 Oft giving way, where still there stood
 Some relics of the old oak wood,
 That darkly huge did intervene,
 And tamed the glaring white with green:
 In these extended lines there lay
 A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI.

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
 To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
 And from the southern Redswire edge,
 To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge;
 From west to east, from south to north,
 Scotland sent all her warriors forth.

* The Borough, or Common Moor of Edinburgh, was of very great extent, reaching from the southern walls of the city to the bottom of Braid Hills.

Marmion might hear the mingled hum
 Of myriads up the mountain come ;
 The horses' tramp and tingling clank,
 Where chiefs reviewed their vassal rank,
 And charger's shrilling neigh ;
 And see the shifting lines advance,
 While frequent flashed, from shield and lance,
 The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII.

Thin curling in the morning air,
 The wreaths of failing smoke declare,
 To embers now the brands decayed,
 Where the night-watch their fires had made.
 They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
 Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
 And dire artillery's clumsy car,
 By sluggish oxen tugged to war ;
 And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,*
 And culverins which France had given.
 Ill-omened gift! the guns remain
 The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII.

Nor marked they less, where in the air
 A thousand streamers flaunted fair ;
 Various in shape, device, and hue,
 Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
 Broad, narrow, swallow-tailed, and square,
 Scroll, pennon, pencil, bandrol,† there
 O'er the pavilions flew.
 Highest, and midmost, was descried
 The royal banner, floating wide ;
 The staff, a pine-tree strong and straight,
 Pitched deeply in a massive stone,
 Which still in memory is shown,
 Yet bent beneath the standard's weight,
 Whene'er the western wind unrolled,
 With toil, the huge and cumbrous fold,

* Seven culverins so called, cast by one Borthwick.

† Each of these feudal ensigns intimated the different rank of those entitled to display them.

And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy Lion ramped in gold.*

XXIX.

Lord Marmion viewed the landscape bright, —
He viewed it with a chief's delight, —
Until within him burned his heart,
And lightning from his eye did part,
As on the battle-day ;
Such glance did falcon never dart,
When stooping on his prey.
“Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
Thy King from warfare to dissuade
Were but a vain essay ;
For, by Saint George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal, nor divine,
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimmed their armor's shine
In glorious battle fray!” —
Answered the bard, of milder mood :
“Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere good,
That kings would think withal,
When peace and wealth their land have blessed,
'Tis better to sit still at rest,
Than rise, perchance to fall.” —

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stayed,
For fairer scene he ne'er surveyed.
When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below,
The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendor red ;
For, on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.

* The well-known arms of Scotland. According to Boethius and Buchanan, the double tressure round the shield was first assumed by Achais, King of Scotland, contemporary of Charlemagne.

Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
 Where the huge castle holds its state
 And all the steep slope down,
 Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
 Piled deep and massy, close and high,
 Mine own romantic town!
 But northward far, with purer blaze,
 On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
 And as each heathy top they kissed,
 It gleamed a purple amethyst.
 Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
 Here Preston-Bay, and Berwick-Law;
 And, broad between them rolled,
 The gallant Frith the eye might note,
 Whose islands on its bosom float,
 Like emeralds chased in gold.
 Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
 As if to give his rapture vent,
 The spur he to his charger lent,
 And raised his bridle-hand,
 And, making demi-volte in air,
 Cried, "Where's the coward that would not dare
 To fight for such a land!"
 The Lindesay smiled his joy to see;
 Nor Marmion's frown repressed his glee.

XXXI.

Thus while they looked, a flourish proud,
 Where mingled trump, and clarion loud,
 And fife, and kettle-drum,
 And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
 And war-pipe, with discordant cry,
 And cymbal clattering to the sky,
 Making wild music bold and high,
 Did up the mountain come;
 The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
 Merrily tolled the hour of prime,
 And thus the Lindesay spoke:—
 "Thus clamor still the war-notes when
 The King to mass his way has ta'en,
 Or to St. Catherine's of Sienne,
 Or chapel of Saint Rocque.
 To you they speak of martial fame:

But me remind of peaceful game,
 When blither was their cheer,
 Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
 In signal none his steed should spare,
 But strive which foremost might repair
 To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII.

“Nor less,” he said, “when looking forth,
 I view yon Empress of the North
 Sit on her hilly throne;
 Her palace’s imperial bowers,
 Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
 Her stately halls, and holy towers—
 Nor less,” he said, “I moan,
 To think what woe mischance may bring,
 And how these merry bells may ring
 The death-dirge of our gallant King;
 Or, with their laram call
 The burghers forth to watch and ward,
 ’Gainst southern sack and fires to guard
 Dun-Edin’s leaguered wall.—
 But not, for my presaging thought,
 Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought!
 Lord Marmion, I say nay:—
 God is the guider of the field,
 He breaks the champion’s spear and shield,—
 But thou thyself shalt say,
 When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
 That England’s dames must weep in bower,
 Her monks the death-mass sing;
 For never saw’st thou such a power
 Led on by such a King.”—
 And now, down winding to the plain,
 The barriers of the camp they gain,
 And there they made a stay.—
 There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
 His hand o’er every Border string,
 And fit his harp the pomp to sing,
 Of Scotland’s ancient Court and King,
 In the succeeding lay.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIFTH

To GEORGE ELLIS, Esq.

Edinburgh.

WHEN dark December glooms the day,
And takes our Autumn joys away;
When short and scant the sunbeam throws,
Upon the weary waste of snows,
A cold and profitless regard,
Like patron on a needy bard;
When sylvan occupation's done,
And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
And hang in idle trophy, near,
The game-pouch, fishing-rod, and spear;
When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
And greyhound with his length of limb,
And pointer, now employed no more,
Cumber our parlor's narrow floor;
When in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemned to rest and feed;
When from our snow-encirled home,
Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam,
Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring;
When wrinkled news-page, thrice conn'd o'er,
Beguiles the dreary hour no more,
And darkling politician, crossed,
Inveighs against the lingering post,
And answering housewife sore complains
Of carriers' snow-impeded wains:
When such the country cheer, I come,
Well pleased, to seek our city home;
For converse, and for books, to change
The forest's melancholy range,
And welcome, with renewed delight,
The busy day, and social night.

Not here need my desponding rhyme
Lament the ravages of time,

As erst by Newark's riven towers,
 And Ettrick stripped of forest bowers.*
 True,—Caledonia's Queen is changed,†
 Since on her dusky summit ranged,
 Within its steepy limits pent,
 By bulwark, line, and battlement,
 And flanking towers, and laky flood,
 Guarded and garrisoned she stood,
 Denying entrance or resort,
 Save at each tall, embattled port:
 Above whose arch, suspended, hung
 Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
 That long is gone,—but not so long,
 Since, early closed, and opening late,
 Jealous revolved the studded gate;
 Whose task from eve to morning tide
 A wicket churlishly supplied.
 Stern, then, and steel-girt was thy brow,
 Dun-Edin! O, how altered now,
 When safe amid thy mountain court
 Thou sitt'st, like Empress at her sport,
 And liberal, unconfined, and free,
 Flinging thy white arms to the sea,
 For thy dark cloud, with umbered lower,
 That hung o'er cliff, and lake, and tower,
 Thou glean'st against the western ray
 Ten thousand lines of brighter day.

Not she, the championess of old,
 In Spenser's magic tale enrolled,—
 She for the charmed spear renowned,
 Which forced each knight to kiss the ground,—
 Not she more changed, when, placed at rest,
 What time she was Malbecco's guest,‡
 She gave to flow her maiden vest;
 When from the corslet's grasp relieved,

* See Introduction to Canto II.

† The old Town of Edinburgh was secured on the north side by a lake, now drained, and on the south by a wall, which there was some attempt to make defensible, even so late as 1745. The gates, and the greater part of the wall, have been pulled down, in the course of the late extensive and beautiful enlargement of the city.

‡ See "The Fairy Queen," Book III., Canto IX.

Free to the sight her bosom heaved ;
 Sweet was her blue eye's modest smile,
 Erst hidden by the aventayle ;
 And down her shoulders graceful rolled
 Her locks profuse, of paly gold.
 They who whilom, in midnight fight,
 Had marvelled at her matchless might,
 No less her maiden charms approved,
 But looking liked, and liking loved.*
 The sight could jealous pangs beguile,
 And charm Malbecco's cares awhile ;
 And he, the wandering Squire of Dames,
 Forgot his Columbella's claims,
 And passion, erst unknown, could gain
 The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane ;
 Nor durst light Paridel advance,
 Bold as he was, a looser glance,—
 She charmed, at once, and tamed the heart,
 Incomparable Britomarte !

So thou, fair city ! disarrayed
 Of battled wall, and rampart's aid,
 As stately seem'st, but lovelier far
 Than in that panoply of war.
 Nor deem that from thy fenceless throne
 Strength and security are flown ;
 Still, as of yore, Queen of the North !
 Still canst thou send thy children forth.
 Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
 Thy burghers rose to man thy wall,
 Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
 Thy dauntless voluntary line ;
 For fosse and turret proud to stand,
 Their breasts the bulwarks of the land
 Thy thousands, trained to martial toil,
 Full red would stain their native soil,
 Ere from thy mural crown there fell
 The slightest knosp, or pinnacle.
 And if it come,—as come it may,
 Dun-Edin ! that eventful day,—
 Renowned for hospitable deed,

* "For every one her liked, and every one her loved."

SPENSER, *as above*.

That virtue much with heaven may plead,
 In patriarchal times whose care
 Descending angels deigned to share;
 That claim may wrestle blessings down
 On those who fight for the Good Town,
 Destined in every age to be
 Refuge of injured royalty;
 Since first, when conquering York arose,
 To Henry meek she gave repose.*
 Till late, with wonder, grief, and awe,
 Great Bourbon's relics, sad she saw.

Truce to these thoughts!—for, as they rise,
 How gladly I avert mine eyes,
 Bodings, or true or false, to change,
 For Fiction's fair romantic range,
 Or for Tradition's dubious light,
 That hovers 'twixt the day and night:
 Dazzling alternately and dim,
 Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
 Knights, squires, and lovely dames to see,
 Creation of my fantasy,
 Then gaze abroad on reeky fen,
 And make of mists invading men.—
 Who loves not more the night of June
 Than dull December's gloomy noon?
 The moonlight than the fog of frost?
 And can we say, which cheats the most?

But who shall teach my harp to gain
 A sound of the romantic strain,
 Whose Anglo-Norman tones whilere
 Could win the Second Henry's ear,†
 Famed Beauclerc called, for that he loved
 The minstrel, and his lay approved?
 Who shall these lingering notes redeem,
 Decaying on Oblivion's stream;
 Such notes as from the Breton tongue
 Marie translated, Blondel sung?—

* Henry VI., with his queen, his heir, and the chiefs of his family, fled to Scotland after the fatal battle of Towton.

† The courts of our Anglo-Norman kings, rather than those of the French monarchs, produced the birth of romance literature.

O! born Time's ravage to repair,
 And make thy dying Muse thy care;
 Who when his scythe her hoary foe
 Was poisoning for the final blow,
 The weapon from his hand could wring,
 And break his glass, and shear his wing,
 And bid, reviving in his strain,
 The gentle poet live again;
 Thou, who canst give to lightest lay
 An unpedantic moral gay,
 Nor less the dullest theme bid fit
 On wings of unexpected wit;
 In letters as in life approved,
 Example honored, and beloved,—
 Dear ELLIS! to the bard impart
 A lesson of thy magic art,
 To win at once the head and heart,—
 At once to charm, instruct, and mend,
 My guide, my pattern, and my friend!

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
 Be long thy pleasing task,—but, O!
 No more by thy example teach
 What few can practice, all can preach;
 With even patience to endure
 Lingered disease, and painful cure,
 And boast affliction's pangs subdued
 By mild and manly fortitude.
 Enough, the lesson has been given:
 Forbid the repetition, Heaven!

Come, listen, then! for thou hast known,
 And loved, the Minstrel's varying tone;
 Who, like his Border sires of old,
 Waked a wild measure, rude and bold,
 Till Windsor's oaks, and Ascot plain,
 With wonder heard the northern strain.
 Come, listen!—bold in thy applause,
 The Bard shall scorn pedantic laws;
 And, as the ancient art could stain
 Achievements on the storied pane,
 Irregularly traced and planned,
 But yet so glowing and so grand;

So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
Field, feast, and combat, to renew,
And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
And all the pomp of chivalry.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Court.

I.

THE train has left the hills of Braid ;
The barrier guard have open made
(So Lindesay bade) the palisade,
That closed the tented ground ;
Their men the warders backward drew,
And carried pikes as they rode through,
Into its ample bound.

Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
Upon the Southern band to stare ;
And envy with their wonder rose,
To see such well-appointed foes ;
Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
So huge, that many simple thought,
But for a vaunt such weapons wrought ;
And little deemed their force to feel,
Through links of mail, and plates of steel,
When, rattling upon Flodden vale,
The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.*

II.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
Glance every line and squadron through ;
And much he marvelled one small land
Could marshal forth such various band :

* This is no poetical exaggeration. In some of the counties of England distinguished for archery, shafts of this extraordinary length were actually used.

For men-at-arms were here,
 Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
 Like iron towers for strength and weight,
 On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
 With battle-axe and spear.
 Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
 Practised their chargers on the plain.
 By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,
 Each warlike feat to show ;
 To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
 And high curvette, that not in vain
 The sword-sway might descend amain
 On foeman's casque below.
 He saw the hardy burghers there
 March armed, on foot, with faces bare,*
 For visor they wore none,
 Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight ;
 But burnished were their corslets bright,
 Their brigantines, and gorgets light,
 Like very silver shone.
 Long pikes they had for standing fight,
 Two-handed swords they wore,
 And many wielded mace of weight,
 And bucklers bright they bore.

III.

On foot the yeoman too, but dressed
 In his steel jack, a swarthy vest,
 With iron quilted well ;
 Each at his back (a slender store)
 His forty days' provision bore,
 As feudal statutes tell.
 His arms were halberd, axe, or spear,
 A cross-bow there, a hagbut here,
 A dagger-knife, and brand.—†

* The Scottish burgesses were appointed to be armed with bows and sheaves, sword, buckler, knife, spear, or a good axe instead of a bow, if worth £100: their armor to be of white or bright harness. They wore *white hats*, i. e. bright steel caps, without crest or visor.

† Bows and quivers were in vain recommended to the peasantry of Scotland, by repeated statutes: spears and axes seem universally to have been used instead of them. Their defensive armor was the plate-jack, hauberk, or brigantine; and their missile weapons cross-bows and culverins. All wore

Sober he seemed, and sad of cheer,
As loth to leave his cottage dear,
And march to foreign strand;
Or musing who would guide his steer,
To till the fallow land.
Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
Did aught of dastard terror lie;—
More dreadful far his ire,
Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name,
In eager mood to battle came,
Their valor like light straw on flame,
A fierce but fading fire.

IV.

Not so the Borderer:—bred to war,
He knew the battle's din afar,
And joyed to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease;
Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please,
Like the loud slogan yell.
On active steed, with lance and blade,
The light-armed pricker plied his trade,—
Let nobles fight for fame;
Let vassals follow where they lead,
Burghers, to guard their townships, bleed,
But war's the Borderers' game.
Their gain, their glory, their delight,
To sleep the day, maraud the night,
O'er mountain, moss, and moor;
Joyful to fight they took their way,
Scarce caring who might win the day,
Their booty was secure.
These, as Lord Marmion's train passed by,
Looked on at first with careless eye,
Nor marvelled aught, well taught to know
The form and force of English bow.
But when they saw the Lord arrayed
In splendid arms, and rich brocade,

swords of excellent temper, and a voluminous handkerchief round their neck, not for cold, but for cutting. The mace also was much used in the Scottish army. When the foudal array of the kingdom was called forth, each man was obliged to appear with forty days' provision.

Each Borderer to his kinsman said,—
 “Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
 Canst guess which road they’ll homeward ride?
 O! could we but on Border side,
 By Eusedale glen, or Liddell’s tide,
 Beset a prize so fair!
 That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
 Might chance to lose his glistering hide;
 Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
 Could make a kirtle rare.”

v.

Next Marmion marked the Celtic race,
 Of different language, form, and face,
 A various race of man;
 Just then the chiefs their tribes arrayed,
 And wild and garish semblance made,
 The checkered trews, and belted plaid,
 And varying notes the war-pipes brayed
 To ever varying clan;
 Wild through their red or sable hair
 Looked out their eyes, with savage stare,
 On Marmion as he passed;
 Their legs above the knee were bare;
 Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
 And hardened to the blast;
 Of taller race, the chiefs they own
 Were by the eagle’s plumage known.
 The hunted red-deer’s undressed hide
 Their hairy buskins well supplied;
 The graceful bonnet decked their head;
 Back from their shoulders hung the plaid;
 A broadsword of unwieldy length,
 A dagger proved for edge and strength,
 A studded targe they wore,
 And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but, O!
 Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
 To that which England bore.
 The Isles-men carried at their backs
 The ancient Danish battle-axe.
 They raised a wild and wondering cry,
 As with his guide rode Marmion by.
 Loud were their clamoring tongues as when

The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mixed,
Grumbled and yelled the pipes betwixt.

VI.

Thus through the Scottish camp they passèd,
And reached the City gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Armed burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamped, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show ;
At every turn, with dinning clang,
The armorer's anvil clashed and rang ;
Or toiled the swarthy smith, to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel ;
Or axe, or falchion, to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
Through street, and lane, and market-place,
Bore lance, or casque, or sword ;
While burghers, with important face,
Described each new-come lord,
Discussed his lineage, told his name,
His following,* and his warlike fame.—
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlooked the crowded street,—
There must the Baron rest,
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
Such was the King's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich and costly wines,†
To Marmion and his train.
And when the appointed hour succeeds,
The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads,
The palace-halls they gain.

* *Following*—Feudal retainers.

† In all transactions of great or petty importance, a present of wine was
a uniform and indispensable preliminary.

VII.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
 That night, with wassail, mirth, and glee :
 King James within her princely bower
 Feasted the chiefs of Scotland's power,
 Summoned to spend the parting hour ;
 For he had charged, that his array
 Should southward march by break of day.
 Well loved that splendid monarch eye

The banquet and the song,
 By day the tourney, and by night
 The merry dance, traced fast and light,
 The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
 The revel loud and long.

This feast outshone his banquets past ;
 It was his blithest,—and his last.
 The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
 Cast on the court a dancing ray ;
 Here to the harp did minstrels sing ;
 There ladies touched a softer string :
 With long-eared cap, and motley vest,
 The licensed fool retailed his jest ;
 His magic tricks the juggler plied ;
 At dice and draughts the gallants vied ;
 While some, in close recess apart,
 Courted the ladies of their heart,
 Nor courted them in vain ;
 For often, in the parting hour,
 Victorious love asserts his power
 O'er coldness and disdain ;
 And flinty is her heart, can view
 To battle march a lover true,—
 Can hear perchance his last adieu,
 Nor own her share of pain.

VIII.

Through this mixed crowd of glee and game,
 The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
 While, reverent, all made room.
 An easy task it was, I trow,
 King James's manly form to know,
 Although, his courtesy to show,
 He doffed, to Marmion bending low,

His broidered cap and plume.
For royal were his garb and mien,
His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
Trimmed with the fur of martin wild;
His vest, of changeful satin sheen,
The dazzled eye beguiled;
His gorgeous collar hung adown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
The thistle brave, of old renown;
His trusty blade, Toledo right,
Descended from a baldric bright;
White were his buskins, on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was buttoned with a ruby rare:
And Marmion deemed he ne'er had seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

IX.

The monarch's form was middle size;
For feat of strength, or exercise,
Shaped in proportion fair;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye,
His short curled beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists;
And, oh! he had that merry glance,
That seldom lady's heart resists.
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
And loved to plead, lament, and sue;
Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain!
For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.
I said he joyed in banquet-bower;
But, mid his mirth, 'twas often strange,
How suddenly his cheer would change.
His look o'ercast and lower,
If, in a sudden turn, he felt
The pressure of his iron belt,
That bound his breast in penance-pain,
In memory of his father slain.*

* To the weight of this belt James added certain ounces every year that he lived. The person and character of James are delineated according to our

Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,
 Soon as the passing pang was o'er,
 Forward he rushed, with double glee,
 Into the stream of revelry:
 Thus, dim-seen object of affright
 Startles the courser in his flight,
 And half he halts, half springs aside;
 But feels the quickening spur applied,
 And, straining on the tightened rein,
 Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

X.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
 Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway:*
 To Scotland's court she came,
 To be a hostage for her lord,
 Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,
 And with the King to make accord,
 Had sent his lovely dame.
 Nor to that lady free alone
 Did the gay King allegiance own;
 For the fair Queen of France
 Sent him a turquois ring, and glove,
 And charged him, as her knight and love,
 For her to break a lance;†
 And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
 And march three miles on Southern land,
 And bid the banners of his band
 In English breezes dance.
 And thus, for France's queen he drest
 His manly limbs in mailed vest;
 And thus admitted English fair,
 His inmost counsels still to share;
 And thus, for both, he madly planned

best historians. He was wont, during his fits of devotion, to assume the dress, and conform to the rules, of the order of Franciscans; and when he had thus done penance for some time in Stirling, to plunge again into the tide of pleasure.

* Our historians impute to the king's infatuated passion the delays which led to the fatal defeat of Flodden.

† The Queen of France wrote a love-letter to the King of Scotland, calling him her love, and beseeching him to raise her an army and come three feet of ground on English ground, for her sake. To that effect she sent him a ring off her finger, with fourteen thousand French crowns to pay his expenses.

The ruin of himself and land!
 And yet, the sooth to tell,
 Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,
 Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
 From Margaret's eyes that fell,—
 His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow's bower.
 All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.

XI.

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
 And weeps the weary day,
 The war against her native soil,
 Her Monarch's risk in battle broil:—
 And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,
 Dame Heron rises with a smile
 Upon the harp to play.
 Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
 The strings her fingers flew;
 And as she touched and tuned them all,
 Even her bosom's rise and fall
 Was plainer given to view;
 For, all for heat, was laid aside
 Her wimple, and her hood untied.
 And first she pitched her voice to sing,
 Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
 And then around the silent ring;
 And laughed, and blushed, and oft did say
 Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,
 She could not, would not, durst not play!
 At length, upon the harp, with glee,
 Mingled with arch simplicity,
 A soft, yet lively air, she rung,
 While thus the wily lady sung.

XII.

LOCHINVAR.

LADY HERON'S SONG.

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
 Through all the wide Border his steed was the best:
 And, save his good broadsword, he weapons had none,
 He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.
 So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
 There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopped not for stone,
 He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
 But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
 The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
 For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
 Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
 Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
 Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
 (For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,
 "O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
 Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"—

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;—
 Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
 And now I am come, with this lost love of mine,
 To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
 There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
 That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,
 He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
 She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
 With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
 He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
 "Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
 That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
 While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
 And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
 And the bride-maidens whispered, "'Twere better, by far,
 To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
 When they reached the hall door, and the charger stood
 near;

So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
 So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
 "She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
 They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Loch-
 invar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
 Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode, and they ran:

There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

XIII.

The Monarch o'er the syren hung,
And beat the measure as she sung;
And, pressing closer, and more near,
He whispered praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied;
And ladies winked, and spoke aside.

The witching dame to Marmion threw

A glance, where seemed to reign
The pride that claims applauses due,
And of her royal conquest, too,

A real or feigned disdain:

Familiar was the look, and told,

Marmion and she were friends of old.

The King observed their meeting eyes,
With something like displeas'd surprise;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.

Straight took he forth the parchment broad,
Which Marmion's high commission showed:

"Our Borders sacked by many a raid,
Our peaceful liege-men robbed," he said;

"On day of truce our Warden slain,
Stout Barton killed, his vessels ta'en—

Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain;
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne."—

XIV.

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
And with stern eye the pageant viewed:
I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
Who coronet of Angus bore,
And, when his blood and heart were high,
Did the third James in camp defy,
And all his minions led to die

On Lauder's dreary flat:

Princes and favorites long grew tame,
 And trembled at the homely name
 Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat.*
 The same who left the dusky vale
 Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,
 Its dungeons, and its towers,
 Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
 And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,
 To fix his princely bowers.
 Though now, in age, he had laid down
 His armor for the peaceful gown,
 And for a staff his brand,
 Yet often would flash forth the fire,
 That could, in youth, a monarch's ire
 And minion's pride withstand ;
 And even that day, at council board,
 Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
 Against the war had Angus stood,
 And chafed his royal Lord.†

XV.

His giant-form, like ruined tower,
 Though fallen its muscles' brawny vaunt,
 Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
 Seemed o'er the gaudy scene to lower :
 His locks and beard in silver grew ;

* Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, a man remarkable for strength of body and mind, acquired the popular name of *Bell-the-Cat*, upon the following remarkable occasion. When the Scottish nobility had assembled to deliberate on putting the obnoxious favorites of James III. to death, Lord Grey told them the fable of the mice, who resolved that one of their number should put a bell round the neck of the cat to warn them of its coming ; but no one was so hardy as to attempt it. "I understand the moral," said Angus : "I will *bell-the-cat*." He bearded the king to purpose by hanging the favorites over the bridge of Lauder, Cochran their chief being elevated higher than the rest.

† Angus was an old man when the war against England was resolved upon. He earnestly spoke against that measure from its commencement ; and, on the eve of the battle of Flodden, remonstrated so freely upon the impolicy of fighting, that the king said to him, with scorn and indignation, "if he was afraid, he might go home." The Earl burst into tears at this insupportable insult, and retired accordingly, leaving his sons, George, master of Angus, and Sir William, of Glenbervie, to command his followers. They were both slain in the battle, with two hundred gentlemen of the name of Douglas.

His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
 Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
 His bitter speech he thus pursued:—
 “Lord Marmion, since these letters say
 That in the North you needs must stay,
 While slightest hopes of peace remain,
 Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
 To say—Return to Lindisfarne,
 Until my herald come again.—
 Then rest you in Tantallon Hold;*
 Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
 A chief unlike his sires of old.
 He wears their motto on his blade,†
 Their blazon o’er his towers displayed;
 Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
 More than to face his country’s foes.
 And, I bethink me, by Saint Stephen,
 But e’en this morn to me was given
 A prize, the first-fruits of the war,
 Ta’en by a galley from Dunbar,
 A bevy of the maids of heaven.
 Under your guard, these holy maids
 Shall safe return to cloister shades,
 And, while they at Tantallon stay,
 Requiem for Cochran’s soul may say.”
 And, with the slaughtered favorite’s name,
 Across the Monarch’s brow there came
 A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

XVI.

In answer naught could Angus speak;
 His proud heart swelled ’wellnigh to break:
 He turned aside, and down his cheek

* The ruins of Tantallon Castle occupy a high rock projecting into the German Ocean, about two miles east of North Berwick. The building is not seen till a close approach, as there is rising ground betwixt it and the land. The circuit is of large extent, fenced upon three sides by the precipice which overhangs the sea, and on the fourth by a double ditch and very strong outworks.

† A very ancient sword, in possession of Lord Douglas, bears, among a great deal of flourishing, two hands pointing to a heart, which is placed betwixt them, and the date 1329, being the year in which Bruce charged the Good Lord Douglas to carry his heart to the Holy Land.

A burning tear there stole.
His hand the monarch sudden took,
That sight his kind heart could not brook :

“Now, by the Bruce’s soul,
Angus, my hasty speech forgive!
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,

I well may say of you,—
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,

More tender, and more true :*
Forgive me, Douglas, once again.”—
And, while the King his hand did strain,
The old man’s tears fell down like rain.

To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whispered to the King aside :—

“Oh! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed!

A child will weep at bramble’s smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman’s heart:

But woe awaits a country, when
She sees the tears of bearded men.

Then, oh! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye!”—

XVII.

Displeased was James, that stranger viewed
And tampered with his changing mood.

“Laugh those that can, weep those that may,”

Thus did the fiery monarch say,
“Southward I march by break of day ;

And if within Tantallon strong,
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth, in his castle-hall.”—

The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answered, grave, the royal vaunt :

“Much honored were my humble home,

* “O Dowglas! Dowglas!
Tendir and trew.”

The Houlats.

If in its halls King James should come ;
 But Nottingham has archers good,
 And Yorkshire men are stern of mood ;
 Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
 On Derby Hills the paths are steep ;
 In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep ;
 And many a banner will be torn,
 And many a knight to earth be borne,
 And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
 Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent :
 Yet pause, brave prince, while yet you may."—
 The Monarch lightly turned away,
 And to his nobles loud did call—
 "Lords, to the dance,—a hall! a hall!"*
 Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
 And led Dame Heron gallantly ;
 And minstrels, at the royal order,
 Rung out—"Blue Bonnets o'er the Border."

XVIII.

Leave we these revels now, to tell
 What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
 Whose galley, as they sailed again
 To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
 Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
 Till James should of their fate decide ;
 And soon, by his command,
 Were gently summoned to prepare
 To journey under Marmion's care,
 As escort honored, safe, and fair,
 Again to English land.
 The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
 Nor knew which Saint she should implore ;
 For when she thought of Constance, sore
 She feared Lord Marmion's mood.
 And judge what Clara must have felt!
 The sword, that hung in Marmion's belt,
 Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
 Unwittingly, King James had given,
 As guard to Whitby's shades,
 The man most dreaded under heaven

* The ancient cry to make room for a dance, or pageant.

By these defenceless maids ;
 Yet what petition could avail,
 Or who would listen to the tale
 Of woman, prisoner and nun,
 Mid bustle of a war begun ?
 They deemed it hopeless to avoid
 The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the King assigned,
 To Marmion's, as their guardian, joined ;
 And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
 The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
 Who warned him by a scroll,
 She had a secret to reveal,
 That much concerned the Church's weal,
 And health of sinner's soul ;
 And, with deep charge of secrecy,
 She named a place to meet,
 Within an open balcony,
 That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
 Above the stately street ;
 To which, as common to each home,
 At night they might in secret come.

XX.

At night in secret there they came,
 The Palmer and the holy dame.
 The moon among the clouds rode high,
 And all the city hum was by.
 Upon the street, where late before
 Did din of war and warriors roar,
 You might have heard a pebble fall,
 A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
 An owlet flap his boding wing
 On Giles's steeple tall.
 The antique buildings, climbing high,
 Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
 Were here wrapt deep in shade :
 There on their brows the moonbeam broke,
 Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
 And on the casements played.
 And other light was none to see,

Save torches gliding far,
Before some chieftain of degree,
Who left the royal revelry
To bowne him for the war.—
A solemn scene the Abbess chose ;
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI.

“O, holy Palmer!” she began,—
“For sure he must be sainted man,
Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
Where the Redeemer’s tomb is found;—
For his dear Church’s sake, my tale
Attend, nor deem of light avail,
Though I must speak of worldly love,—
How vain to those who wed above!—
De Wilton and Lord Marmion wooed
Clara de Clare, of Gloster’s blood ;
(Idle it were of Whitby’s dame,
To say of that same blood I came ;)
And once, when jealous rage was high,
Lord Marmion said despiteously,
Wilton was traitor in his heart,
And had made league with Martin Swart,*
When he came here on Simnel’s part ;
And only cowardice did restrain
His rebel aid on Stokefield’s plain,—
And down he threw his glove:—the thing
Was tried, as wont, before the King ;
Where frankly did De Wilton own,
That Swart in Guelders he had known ;
And that between them then there went
Some scroll of courteous compliment.
For this he to his castle sent ;
But when his messenger returned,
Judge how De Wilton’s fury burned :
For in his packet there were laid
Letters that claimed disloyal aid,
And proved King Henry’s cause betrayed.

* A German general, who commanded the auxiliaries sent by the Duchess of Burgundy with Lambert Simnel. He was defeated and killed at Stokefield.

His fame, thus blighted, in the field
 He strove to clear, by spear and shield;—
 To clear his fame in vain he strove,
 For wondrous are His ways above!
 Perchance some form was unobserved;
 Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved;*
 Else how could guiltless champion quail,
 Or how the blessed ordeal fail?

XXII.

“His squire, who now De Wilton saw
 As recreant doomed to suffer law,
 Repentant, owned in vain,
 That, while he had the scrolls in care,
 A stranger maiden, passing fair,
 Had drenched him with a beverage rare;—
 His words no faith could gain.
 With Clare alone he credence won,
 Who, rather than wed Marmion,
 Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
 To give our house her livings fair,
 And die a vestal vot'ress there.
 The impulse from the earth was given,
 But bent her to the paths of heaven.
 A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
 Ne'er sheltered her in Whitby's shade,
 No, not since Saxon Edelfled;
 Only one trace of earthly strain,
 That for her lover's loss,
 She cherishes a sorrow vain,
 And murmurs at the cross.—
 And then her heritage;—it goes
 Along the banks of Tame;
 Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
 In meadows rich the heifer lows,
 The falconer, and huntsman, knows
 Its woodlands for the game.
 Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
 And I, her humble vot'ress here,
 Should do a deadly sin,

* It was early necessary for those who felt themselves obliged to believe in the divine judgment being enunciated in the trial by duel, to find salves for the strange and obviously precarious chances of the combat.

Her temple spoiled before mine eyes,
 If this false Marmion such a prize
 By my consent should win:
 Yet hath our boisterous Monarch sworn,
 That Clare shall from our house be torn;
 And grievous cause have I to fear,
 Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

XXIII.

“Now, prisoner, helpless, and betrayed
 To evil power, I claim thine aid,
 By every step that thou hast trod
 To holy shrine, and grotto dim;
 By every martyr’s tortured limb:
 By angel, saint, and seraphim,
 And by the Church of God!
 For mark:—When Wilton was betrayed,
 And with his squire forged letters laid,
 She was, alas! that sinful maid,
 By whom the deed was done,—
 O! shame and horror to be said!—
 She was a perjured nun:
 No clerk in all the land, like her,
 Traced quaint and varying character.
 Perchance you may a marvel deem,
 That Marmion’s paramour,
 (For such vile thing she was,) should scheme
 Her lover’s nuptial hour;
 But o’er him thus she hoped to gain,
 As privy to his honor’s stain,
 Illimitable power:
 For this she secretly retained
 Each proof that might the plot reveal,
 Instructions with his hand and seal;
 And thus Saint Hilda deigned,
 Through sinner’s perfidy impure,
 Her house’s glory to secure,
 And Clare’s immortal weal.

XXIV.

“’Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
 How to my hand these papers fell;
 With me they must not stay.

Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!
 Who knows what outrage he might do,
 While journeying by the way?—
 O! blessed Saint, if e'er again
 I venturous leave thy calm domain,
 To travel or by land or main,
 Deep penance may I pay!—
 Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
 I give this packet to thy care,
 For thee to stop they will not dare;
 And, O! with cautious speed,
 To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
 That he may show them to the King;
 And for thy well-earned meed,
 Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine,
 A weekly mass shall still be thine,
 While priests can sing and read.—
 What ail'st thou?—Speak!"—For as he took
 The charge, a strong emotion shook
 His frame; and, ere reply,
 They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,
 Like distant clarion feebly blown,
 That on the breeze did die;
 And loud the Abbess shrieked in fear,
 "Saint Withold save us!—What is here!
 Look at yon City Cross!
 See on its battled tower appear
 Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear,
 And blazoned banners toss!"—

XXV.

Dun-Edin's Cross,* a pillared stone,
 Rose on a turret octagon;
 (But now is razed that monument,
 Whence royal edict rang,
 And voice of Scotland's law was sent,

* The Cross of Edinburgh was an ancient and curious structure. The lower part was an octagonal tower, sixteen feet in diameter, and about fifteen feet high. At each angle there was a pillar, and between them an arch, of the Grecian shape. Above these was a projecting battlement, with a turret at each corner, and medallions, of rude but curious workmanship, between them. Above this rose the proper Cross, a column of one stone, upwards of twenty feet high, surmounted with a unicorn. From the tower of the Cross, the heralds published the acts of Parliament.

In glorious trumpet clang.
 O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
 Upon its dull destroyer's head!—
 A minstrel's malison* is said.—)
 Then on its battlements they saw
 A vision, passing Nature's law,
 Strange, wild, and dimly seen;
 Figures, that seemed to rise and die,
 Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
 While naught confirmed could ear or eye
 Discern of sound or mien.
 Yet darkly did it seem, as there
 Heralds and Pursuivants prepare,
 With trumpet sound, and blazon fair,
 A summons to proclaim;
 But indistinct the pageant proud,
 As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
 When flings the moon upon her shroud
 A wavering tinge of flame;
 It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
 From midmost of the spectre crowd,
 This awful summons came:†

XXVI.

“Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
 Whose names I now shall call,
 Scottish, or foreigner, give ear!
 Subjects of him who sent me here,
 At his tribunal to appear,
 I summon one and all:
 I cite you by each deadly sin,
 That e'er hath soiled your hearts within;
 I cite you by each brutal lust,
 That e'er defiled your earthly dust,—
 By wrath, by pride, by fear,
 By each o'er-mastering passion's tone,
 By the dark grave, and dying groan!
 When forty days are past and gone,
 I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,

* *i. e.* Curse.

† This supernatural citation is mentioned by all our Scottish historians. It was probably, like the apparition at Linlithgow, an attempt, by those averse to the war, to impose upon the superstitious temper of James IV.

To answer and appear."—
 Then thundered forth a roll of names:—
 The first was thine, unhappy James!
 Then all thy nobles came;
 Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
 Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,—
 Why should I tell their separate style?
 Each chief of birth and fame,
 Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
 Fore-doomed to Flodden's carnage pile,
 Was cited there by name;
 And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
 Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
 De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
 The self-same thundering voice did say.—
 But then another spoke:
 "Thy fatal summons I deny,
 And thine infernal lord defy,
 Appealing me to Him on high,
 Who burst the sinner's yoke."—
 At that dread accent, with a scream,
 Parted the pageant like a dream,
 The summoner was gone.
 Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
 And fast, and fast, her beads did tell;
 Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
 And found her there alone.
 She marked not, at the scene aghast,
 What time, or how, the Palmer passed.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move.
 Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
 Save when, for weal of those they love,
 To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
 The tottering child, the anxious fair,
 The gray-haired sire, with pious care,
 To chapels and to shrines repair.—
 Where is the Palmer now? and where
 The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare?—
 Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair
 They journey in thy charge:
 Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,

The Palmer still was with the band ;
Angus, like Lindesay, did command,
That none should roam at large.
But in that Palmer's altered mien
A wondrous change might now be seen ;
Freely he spoke of war,
Of marvels wrought by single hand,
When lifted for a native land ;
And still looked high, as if he planned
Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed, and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frocke,
Would first his mettle bold provoke,
Then soothe, or quell his pride.
Old Hubert said, that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII.

Some half-hour's march behind, there came
By Eustace governed fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
With all her nuns, and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought ;
Ever he feared to aggravate
Clara de Clare's suspicious hate ;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
To wait till, from the nuns removed,
The influence of kinsmen loved,
And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.
His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fanned by looks and sighs,
And lighted oft at lady's eyes ;
He longed to stretch his wide command
O'er luckless Clara's ample land :
Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
Although the pang of humbled pride
The place of jealousy supplied,
Yet conquest, by that meanness won
He almost loathed to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause,
Which made him burst through honor's laws.

If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone
Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX.

And now, when close at hand they saw
North-Berwick's town, and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause awhile,
Before a venerable pile,*

Whose turrets viewed, afar,
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,

The ocean's peace, or war.

At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable Dame,
And prayed Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
With her, a loved and honored guest,
Till Douglas should a bark prepare,
To waft her back to Whitby fair.

Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
And thanked the Scottish Prioress;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that passed between.

O'erjoyed the nuns their palfreys leave:

But when fair Clara did intend,

Like them, from horseback to descend,
Fitz-Eustace said,—“I grieve,
Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
Such gentle company to part.—

Think not discourtesy,

But Lords' commands must be obeyed;
And Marmion and the Douglas said,

That you must wend with me.

Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
Which to the Scottish Earl he showed,
Commanding, that, beneath his care,

Without delay, you shall repair,
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.”—

XXX.

The startled Abbess loud exclaimed;
But she, at whom the blow was aimed,

* The convent alluded to is a foundation of Cistercian nuns, near North Berwick, of which there are still some remains. It was founded by Duncan, Earl of Fife, in 1216.

Grew pale as death, and cold as lead,—
She deemed she heard her death-doom read.

“Cheer thee, my child!” the Abbess said,
“They dare not tear thee from my hand,
To ride alone with armed band.”—

“Nay, holy mother, nay,”

Fitz-Eustace said, “the lovely Clare
Will be in Lady Angus’ care,

In Scotland while we stay ;

And, when we move, an easy ride
Will bring us to the English side,
Female attendance to provide

Befitting Gloster’s heir ;

Nor thinks, nor dreams my noble lord,
By slightest look, or act, or word,
To harass Lady Clare.

Her faithful guardian he will be,
Nor sue for slightest courtesy

That e’en to stranger falls,

Till he shall place her, safe and free,
Within her kinsman’s halls.”—

He spoke, and blushed with earnest grace ;

His faith was painted on his face,

And Clare’s worst fear relieved.

The Lady Abbess loud exclaimed
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,

Entreated, threatened, grieved ;

To martyr, saint, and prophet prayed,

Against Lord Marmion inveighed,

And called the Prioress to aid,

To curse with candle, bell, and book.—

Her head the grave Cistercian shook :

“The Douglas, and the King,” she said,

“In their commands will be obeyed ;

Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall

The maiden in Tantallon hall.”—

XXXI.

The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
Assumed her wonted state again,—

For much of state she had,—

Composed her veil, and raised her head,
And—“Bid,” in solemn voice she said,

"Thy master, bold and bad,
 The records of his house turn o'er,
 And, when he shall there written see,
 That one of his own ancestry
 Drove the Monks forth of Coventry,*
 Bid him his fate explore!
 Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
 His charger hurled him to the dust,
 And, by a base plebeian thrust,
 He died his band before.
 God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;
 He is a chief of high degree,
 And I a poor recluse;
 Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
 Even such weak minister as me
 May the oppressor bruise:
 For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
 The mighty in his sin,
 And Jael thus, and Deborah,"—
 Here hasty Blount broke in:
 "Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band;
 St. Anton' fire thee! wilt thou stand
 All day, with bonnet in thy hand,
 To hear the Lady preach?
 By this good light! if thus we stay,
 Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,
 Will sharper sermon teach.
 Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse;
 The Dame must patience take perforce."—

XXXII.

"Submit we then to force," said Clare;
 "But let this barbarous lord despair
 His purposed aim to win;
 Let him take living, land, and life;
 But to be Marmion's wedded wife

* Robert de Marmion, in the reign of King Stephen, having expelled the monks from the church of Coventry, was not long of experiencing the divine judgment, as the same monks no doubt termed his disaster. Having waged a feudal war with the Earl of Chester, Marmion's horse fell, as he charged against a body of the Earl's followers: the rider's thigh being broken by the fall, his head was cut off by a common foot-soldier, ere he could receive any succor.

In me were deadly sin :
 And if it be the king's decree,
 That I must find no sanctuary,
 Where even a homicide might come,
 And safely rest his head,
 Though at its open portals stood,
 Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
 The kinsmen of the dead ;
 Yet one asylum is my own,
 Against the dreaded hour ;
 A low, a silent, and a lone,
 Where kings have little power.
 One victim is before me there.—
 Mother, your blessing, and in prayer
 Remember your unhappy Clare !”—
 Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows
 Kind blessings many a one ;
 Weeping and wailing loud arose,
 Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
 Of every simple nun.
 His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
 And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.
 Then took the squire her rein,
 And gently led away her steed,
 And, by each courteous word and deed,
 To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
 When o'er a height they passed,
 And, sudden, close before them showed
 His towers, Tantallon vast :
 Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
 And held impregnable in war.
 On a projecting rock they rose,
 And round three sides the ocean flows ;
 The fourth did battled walls inclose,
 And double mound and fosse.
 By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,
 Through studded gates, an entrance long,
 To the main court they cross.
 It was a wide and stately square ;
 Around were lodgings fit and fair,

And towers of various form,
 Which on the court projected far,
 And broke its lines quadrangular.
 Here was square keep, there turret high,
 Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
 Whence oft the Warder could descry
 The gathering ocean-storm.

XXXIV.

Here did they rest.—The princely care
 Of Douglas, why should I declare,
 Or say they met reception fair?
 Or why the tidings say,
 Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
 By hurrying posts, or fleeter fame,
 With every varying day?
 And, first, they heard King James had won
 Ettall, and Wark, and Ford; and then,
 That Norham castle strong was ta'en.
 At that, sore marvelled Marmion;—
 And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand
 Would soon subdue Northumberland:
 But whispered news there came,
 That, while his host inactive lay,
 And melted by degrees away,
 King James was dallying off the day
 With Heron's wily dame.—
 Such acts to chronicles I yield;
 Go seek them there, and see:
 Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
 And not a history.—
 At length they heard the Scottish host
 On that high ridge had made their post,
 Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;
 And that brave Surrey many a band
 Had gathered in the southern land,
 And marched into Northumberland,
 And camp at Wooler ta'en.
 Marmion, like charger in the stall,
 That hears without the trumpet call,
 Began to chafe and swear:—
 "A sorry thing to hide my head
 In castle, like a fearful maid,

When such a field is near;
 Needs must I see this battle-day:
 Death to my fame, if such a fray
 Were fought, and Marmion away!
 The Douglas, too, I wot not why
 Hath 'bated of his courtesy:
 No longer in his halls I'll stay."—
 Then bade his band they should array
 For march against the dawning day.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH.

To RICHARD HEBER, Esq.

Mertoun-House, Christmas.

HEAP on more wood!—the wind is chill;
 But let it whistle as it will,
 We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
 Each age has deemed the new-born year
 The fittest time for festal cheer:
 Even heathen yet, the savage Dane
 At Iol more deep the mead did drain;*
 High on the beach his galleys drew,
 And feasted all his pirate cr w;
 Then in his low and pine-built hall,
 Where shields and axes decked the wall,
 They gorged upon the half-dressed steer;
 Caroused in seas of sable beer;
 While round, in brutal jest, were thrown

* The Iol of the heathen Danes (a word still applied to Christmas in Scotland), was solemnized with great festivity. The humor of the Danes at table displayed itself in pelting each other with bones; and Torf us tells a curious story, of one Hottus, who was so generally assailed with these missiles, that he constructed, out of the bones with which he was overwhelmed, a very respectable intrenchment, against those who continued the raillery. In the dances of the northern warriors round the great fires of pine-trees, they danced with such fury, holding each other by the hands, that, if the grasp of any failed, he was pitched into the fire with the velocity of a sling. The sufferer, on such occasions, was instantly plucked out, and obliged to quaff off a certain measure of ale as a penalty for "spoiling the king's fire."

The half-gnawed rib and marrow-bone ;
 Or listened all, in grim delight,
 While scalds yelled out the joys of fight.
 Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
 While wildly loose their red locks fly,
 And dancing round the blazing pile,
 They make such barbarous mirth the while,
 As best might to the mind recall
 The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
 Loved when the year its course had rolled,
 And brought blithe Christmas back again,
 With all his hospitable train.
 Domestic and religious rite
 Gave honor to the holy night :
 On Christmas eve the bells were rung ;
 On Christmas eve the mass was sung ;*
 That only night, in all the year,
 Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
 The damsel donned her kirtle sheen ;
 The hall was dressed with holly green ;
 Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
 To gather in the misletoe.
 Then opened wide the baron's hall
 To vassal, tenant, serf, and all ;
 Power laid his rod of rule aside,
 And Ceremony doffed his pride.
 The heir, with roses in his shoes,
 That night might village partner choose ;
 The lord, underogating, share
 The vulgar game of " post and pair."'
 All hailed, with uncontrolled delight,
 And general voice, the happy night,
 That to the cottage, as the crown,
 Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
 Went roaring up the chimney wide ;
 The huge hall-table's oaken face,
 Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
 Bore then upon its massive board

* In Roman Catholic countries, mass is never said at night, excepting on Christmas eve.

No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's head frowned on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell,
How, when, and where the monster fell;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round in good brown bowls,
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce,
At such high tide, her savory goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;*
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made:
But, O! what maskers richly dight
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger in our northern clime
Some remnants of the good old time;
And still, within our valleys here,
We hold the kindred title dear,
Even when, perchance, its far-fetched claim
To Southron ear sounds empty name;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,

* It seems certain, that the Mummers of England, who used to go about in disguise to the neighboring houses, bearing the then useless ploughshare and the *Guisards* of Scotland, not yet in total disuse, present, in some indistinct degree, a shadow of the old mysteries, which were the origin of the English drama.

Is warmer than the mountain-stream.*
 And thus, my Christmas still I hold
 Where my great-grandsire came of old,†
 With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
 And reverend apostolic air—
 The feast and holy-tide to share,
 And mix sobriety with wine,
 And honest mirth with thoughts divine:
 Small thought was his, in after time
 E'er to be hitched into a rhyme.
 The simple sire could only boast,
 That he was loyal to his cost;
 The banished race of kings revered,
 And lost his land,—but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind
 Is with fair liberty combined;
 Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
 And flies constraint the magic wand
 Of the fair dame that rules the land.
 Little we heed the tempest drear,
 While music, mirth, and social cheer,
 Speed on their wings the passing year.
 And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
 When not a leaf is on the bough.
 Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
 As loth to leave the sweet domain;
 And holds his mirror to her face,
 And clips her with a close embrace:—
 Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
 And as reluctant turn us home.

How just, that, at this time of glee,
 My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee!
 For many a merry hour we've known,
 And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.

* "Blood is warmer than water,"—a proverb meant to vindicate our family predilections.

† This venerable old gentleman was the younger brother of William Scott of Raeburn. Being the cadet of a cadet of the Harden family, he had very little to lose; yet he contrived to lose the small property he had, by engaging in the civil wars and intrigues of the house of Stuart. His veneration for the exiled family was so great, that he swore he would not shave his beard till they were restored.

Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,
 And leave these classic tomes in peace!
 Of Roman and of Grecian lore,
 Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
 These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say,
 Were "pretty fellows in their day,"*
 But time and tide o'er all prevail—
 On Christmas eve a Christmas tale—
 Of wonder and of war—"Profane!
 What! leave the lofty Latian strain,
 Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
 To hear the clash of rusty arms;
 In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,
 To jostle conjurer and ghost,
 Goblin and witch!"—Nay, Heber dear,
 Before you touch my charter, hear:
 Though Leyden aids, alas! no more,
 My cause with many-languaged lore,
 This may I say:—in realms of death
 Ulysses meets Alcides' *wraith*;
 Æneas, upon Thracia's shore,
 The ghost of murdered Polydore;
 For omens, we in Livy cross,
 At every turn, *locutus Bos*.
 As grave and duly speaks that ox,
 As if he told the price of stocks;
 Or held, in Rome republican,
 The place of common-councilman.

All nations have their omens drear,
 Their legends wild of woe and fear.
 To Cambria look—the peasant see,
 Bethink him of Glendowerdy,
 And shun "the spirit's blasted tree."
 The Highlander, whose red claymore
 The battle turned on Maida's shore,
 Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
 If asked to tell a fairy tale:†

* "Hannibal was a pretty fellow, sir—a very pretty fellow in his day."—*Old Bachelor*.

† The belief in fairies is deeply impressed on the Highlanders, who think they are particularly offended with mortals who talk of them, who wear their favorite color, green, or in any respect interfere with their affairs. This

He fears the vengeful Elfin King,
 Who leaves that day his grassy ring;
 Invisible to human ken,
 He walks among the sons of men.

Didst e'er, dear Heber, pass along
 Beneath the towers of Franchémont,*
 Which, like an eagle's nest in air,
 Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair?—
 Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
 A mighty treasure buried lay,
 Amassed through rapine, and through wrong,
 By the last lord of Franchémont.
 The iron chest is bolted hard,
 A huntsman sits, its constant guard;
 Around his neck his horn is hung,
 His hanger in his belt is slung;
 Before his feet his bloodhounds lie:
 An 'twere not for his gloomy eye,
 Whose withering glance no heart can brook,
 As true a huntsman doth he look,
 As bugle e'er in brake did sound,
 Or ever halloed to a hound.
 To chase the fiend, and win the prize,
 In that same dungeon ever tries
 An aged necromantic priest;
 It is an hundred years at least,
 Since 'twixt them first the strife begun,
 And neither yet has lost or won.
 And oft the conjurer's words will make
 The stubborn Demon groan and quake;
 And oft the bands of iron break,
 Or burst one lock, that still amain,
 Fast as 'tis opened, shuts again.

is particularly to be avoided on Friday, when they are more active, and possessed of greater power.

* It is firmly believed by the neighboring peasantry, that the last Baron of Franchémont deposited, in one of the vaults of the castle, a ponderous chest, containing an immense treasure in gold and silver, which, by some magic spell, was intrusted to the care of the devil, who is constantly found sitting on the chest in the shape of a huntsman. Any one adventurous enough to touch the chest, is instantly seized with the palsy. Yet if anybody can discover the mystic words used by the person who deposited the treasure, and pronounce them, the fiend must instantly decamp.

That magic strife within the tomb
May last until the day of doom,
Unless the Adept shall learn to tell
The very word that clenched the spell,
When Franch'mont locked the treasure cell.
An hundred years are past and gone,
And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
Excuse for old Pitscottie say ;
Whose gossip history has given
My song the messenger from heaven,
That warned, in Lithgow, Scotland's King,
Nor less the infernal summoning ;
May pass the monk of Durham's tale,
Whose Demon fought in Gothic mail ;
May pardon plead for Fordun grave,
Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.
But why such instances to you,
Who, in an instant, can review
Your treasured hoards of various lore,
And furnish twenty thousand more ?
Hoard, not like theirs whose volumes rest
Like treasures in the Franch'mont chest ;
While gripple owners still refuse
To others what they cannot use ;
Give them the priest's whole century,
They shall not spell you letters three ;
Their pleasure in the book's the same
The magpie takes in pilfered gem.
Thy volumes, open as thy heart,
Delight, amusement, science, art,
To every ear and eye impart ;
Yet who, of all who thus employ them,
Can, like the owner's self, enjoy them ?—
But, hark ! I hear the distant drum :
The day of Flodden Field is come.—
Adieu, dear Heber ! life and health,
And store of literary wealth.

CANTO SIXTH.

The Battle.

I.

WHILE great events were on the gale,
 And each hour brought a varying tale,
 And the demeanor, changed and cold,
 Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold,
 And like the impatient steed of war,
 He snuffed the battle from afar ;
 And hopes were none, that back again,
 Herald should come from Terouenne,
 Where England's King in leaguer lay,
 Before decisive battle-day ;
 While these things were, the mournful Clare
 Did in the Dame's devotions share :
 For the good Countess ceaseless prayed,
 To Heaven and Saints, her sons to aid,
 And, with short interval, did pass
 From prayer to book, from book to mass,
 And all in high Baronial pride,—
 A life both dull and dignified ;—
 Yet as Lord Marmion nothing pressed
 Upon her intervals of rest,
 Dejected Clara well could bear
 The formal state, the lengthened prayer,
 Though dearest to her wounded heart
 The hours that she might spend apart.

II.

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
 Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
 Many a rude tower and rampart there
 Repelled the insult of the air,
 Which, when the tempest vexed the sky,
 Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by.
 Above the rest, a turret square
 Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,

Of sculpture rude, a stony shield ;
 The Bloody Heart was in the field,
 And in the chief three mullets stood,
 The cognizance of Douglas blood.
 The turret held a narrow stair,
 Which, mounted, gave you access where
 A parapet's embattled row
 Did seaward round the castle go :
 Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
 Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
 Sometimes in platform broad extending,
 Its varying circle did combine
 Bulwark, and bartisan, and line,
 And bastion, tower, and vantage-coign ;
 Above the booming ocean leant
 The far-projecting battlement ;
 The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
 Upon the precipice below.
 Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
 Gate-works, and walls, were strongly manned :
 No need upon the sea-girt side ;
 The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
 Approach of human step denied ;
 And thus these lines, and ramparts rude,
 Were left in deepest solitude.

III.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
 Would to these battlements repair,
 And muse upon her sorrows there,
 And list the sea-bird's cry ;
 Or slow, like noon-tide ghost, would glide
 Along the dark-gray bulwark's side,
 And ever on the heaving tide
 Look down with weary eye.
 Oft did the cliff, and swelling main,
 Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,—
 A home she ne'er might see again ;
 For she had laid adown,
 So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
 And frontlet of the cloister pale,
 And Benedictine gown :
 It were unseemly sight, he said,

A novice out of convent shade.—
 Now her bright locks, with sunny glow,
 Again adorned her brow of snow;
 Her mantle rich, whose borders, round,
 A deep and fretted broidery bound,
 In golden foldings sought the ground;
 Of holy ornament, alone
 Remained a cross with ruby stone;
 And often did she look
 On that which in her hand she bore,
 With velvet bound, and broidered o'er,
 Her breviary book.
 In such a place, so lone, so grim,
 At dawning pale, or twilight dim,
 It fearful would have been,
 To meet a form so richly dressed,
 With book in hand, and cross on breast,
 And such a woeful mien.
 Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
 To practice on the gull and crow,
 Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,
 And did by Mary swear,—
 Some love-lorn Fay she might have been,
 Or, in romance, some spell-bound queen;
 For ne'er, in work-day world, was seen
 A form so witching fair.

IV.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
 It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
 And, sighing, thought—"The Abbess there,
 Perchance, does to her home repair;
 Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
 Walks hand in hand with Charity;
 Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
 Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,
 That the enraptured sisters see
 High vision and deep mystery;
 The very form of Hilda fair,
 Hovering upon the sunny air,
 And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
 O! wherefore to my duller eye,
 Did still the Saint her form deny!

Was it, that, seared by sinful scorn,
 My heart could neither melt nor burn?
 Or lie my warm affections low,
 With him that taught them first to glow?—
 Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew,
 To pay thy kindness grateful due,
 And well could brook the mild command,
 That ruled thy simple maiden band.—
 How different now! condemned to bide
 My doom from this dark tyrant's pride.—
 But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
 That constant mind, and hate of wrong,
 Descended to a feeble girl,
 From Red De Clare, stout Gloster's Earl:
 Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
 He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

V.

“But see!—what makes this armor here?”
 For in her path there lay
 Targe, corslet, helm;—she viewed them near.—
 “The breastplate pierced!—Ay, much I fear,
 Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
 That hath made fatal entrance here,
 As these dark blood-gouts say.—
 Thus Wilton!—Oh! not corslet's ward,
 Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
 Could be thy manly bosom's guard,
 On yon disastrous day!”—
 She raised her eyes in mournful mood,—
 WILTON himself before her stood!
 It might have seemed his passing ghost,
 For every youthful grace was lost;
 And joy unwonted, and surprise,
 Gave their strange wildness to his eyes.—
 Expect not, noble dames and lords,
 That I can tell such scene in words:
 What skilful limner e'er would choose
 To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
 Unless to mortal it were given
 To dip his brush in dyes of heaven?
 Far less can my weak line declare
 Each changing passion's shade;

Brightening to rapture from despair,
Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
And joy, with her angelic air,
And hope, that paints the future fair.

Their varying hues displayed :
Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,
Till all fatigued, the conflict yield,
And mighty love retains the field.
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delayed,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply.

VI.

DE WILTON'S HISTORY.

“Forget we that disastrous day,
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragged,—but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled,—
I found me on a pallet low,
Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
Austin,—remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush, when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair?—
Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed,—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day,
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care,
When sense returned to wake despair;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a Palmer's weeds arrayed,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journeyed many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth.

But mingled with the dregs of earth.
 Oft Austin for my reason feared,
 When I would sit, and deeply brood
 On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
 Or wild mad schemes upreared.
 My friend at length fell sick, and said,
 God would remove him soon;
 And while upon his dying bed,
 He begged of me a boon—
 If ere my deadliest enemy
 Beneath my brand should conquered lie,
 Even then my mercy should awake,
 And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII.

“ Still restless as a second Cain,
 To Scotland next my rout was ta'en.
 Full well the paths I knew;
 Fame of my fate made various sound,
 That death in pilgrimage I found,
 That I had perished of my wound,—
 None cared which tale was true:
 And living eye could never guess
 De Wilton in his palmer's dress;
 For now that sable slough is shed,
 And trimmed my shaggy beard and head,
 I scarcely know me in a glass.
 A chance most wondrous did provide,
 That I should be that Baron's guide—
 I will not name his name!—
 Vengeance to God alone belongs;
 But, when I think on all my wrongs,
 My blood is liquid flame!
 And ne'er the time shall I forget,
 When, in a Scottish hostel set,
 Dark looks we did exchange:
 What were his thoughts I cannot tell;
 But in my bosom mustered Hell
 Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII.

“ A word of vulgar augury,
 That broke from me, I scarce knew why,

Brought on a village tale ;
 Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
 And sent him armed forth by night.
 I borrowed steed and mail,
 And weapons, from his sleeping band ;
 And, passing from a postern door,
 We met, and 'countered, hand to hand,—
 He fell on Gifford-moor.
 For the death-stroke my brand I drew,
 (O then my helmed head he knew,
 The Palmer's cowl was gone,)
 Then had three inches of my blade
 The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
 My hand the thought of Austin staid ;
 I left him there alone.—
 O good old man ! even from the grave,
 Thy spirit could thy master save :
 If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
 Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
 Given to my hand this packet dear,
 Of power to clear my injured fame,
 And vindicate De Wilton's name.—
 Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
 Of the strange pageantry of Hell,
 That broke our secret speech—
 It rose from the infernal shade,
 Or featly was some juggle played,
 A tale of peace to teach.
 Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
 When my name came among the rest.

IX.

“ Now here, within Tantallon Hold,
 To Douglas late my tale I told,
 To whom my house was known of old.
 Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
 This eve anew shall dub me knight.
 These were the arms that once did turn
 The tide of fight on Otterburne,
 And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
 When the Dead Douglas won the field.
 These Angus gave—his armorer's care,
 Ere morn, shall every breach repair ;

For naught, he said, was in his halls,
 But ancient armor on the walls,
 And aged chargers in the stalls,
 And women, priests, and gray-haired men;
 The rest were all in Twisel glen.*
 And now I watch my armor here,
 By law of arms, till midnight's near,
 Then, once again a belted knight,
 Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

X.

“There soon again we meet, my Clare!
 This Baron means to guide thee there:
 Douglas reveres his king's command,
 Else would he take thee from his band.
 And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
 Will give De Wilton justice due.
 Now meeter far for martial broil,
 Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
 Once more”——“O Wilton! must we then
 Risk new-found happiness again,
 Trust fate of arms once more?
 And is there not a humble glen,
 Where we, content and poor,
 Might build a cottage in the shade,
 A shepherd thou, and I to aid
 Thy task on dale and moor?—
 That reddening brow!—too well I know,
 Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
 While falsehood stains thy name:
 Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
 Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
 And weep a warrior's shame;
 Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
 Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
 And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
 And send thee forth to fame!”

XI.

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
 The midnight moonbeam slumbering lay,

* Where James encamped before taking post on Flodden.

And poured its silver light, and pure,
 Through loop-hole, and through embrasure,
 Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
 But chief where arched windows wide
 Illuminate the chapel's pride,
 The sober glances fall.
 Much was there need; though seamed with scars,
 Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
 Though two gray priests were there,
 And each a blazing torch held high,
 You could not by their blaze descry
 The chapel's carving fair.
 Amid that dim and smoky light,
 Checkering the silvery moonshine bright,
 A bishop by the altar stood,*
 A noble lord of Douglas blood,
 With mitre sheen, and roquet white.
 Yet showed his meek and thoughtful eye
 But little pride of prelacy;
 More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
 He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
 Than that beneath his rule he held
 The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
 Beside him ancient Angus stood,
 Doffed his furred gown, and sable hood:
 O'er his huge form, and visage pale,
 He wore a cap and shirt of mail;
 And leaned his large and wrinkled hand
 Upon the huge and sweeping brand,
 Which wont, of yore, in battle fray,
 His foeman's limbs to shred away,
 As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.†
 He seemed as, from the tombs around,
 Rising at judgment-day,
 Some giant Douglas may be found
 In all his old array;

* The well-known Gawain Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, son of Archibald Bell-the-Cat, Earl of Angus. He was author of a Scottish metrical version of the *Æneid*, and of many other poetical pieces of great merit. He had not at this period attained the mitre.

† Angus had strength and personal activity corresponding to his courage. Spens of Kilspindie, a favorite of James IV., having spoken of him lightly, the Earl met him while hawking, and compelling him to single combat, at one blow cut asunder his thigh-bone, and killed him on the spot.

So pale his face, so huge his limb,
So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
And Clare the spurs bound on his heels ;
And think what next he must have felt,
At buckling of the falchion belt!

And judge how Clara changed her hue,
While fastening to her lover's side

A friend, which, though in danger tried,
He once had found untrue!

Then Douglas struck him with his blade :

“ Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,

I dub thee knight.

Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir !

For king, for church, for lady fair,

See that thou fight.”

And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,

Said,—“ Wilton! grieve not for thy woes,

Disgrace, and trouble ;

For He, who honor best bestows,

May give thee double.”—

De Wilton sobbed, for sob he must—

“ Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust

That Douglas is my brother!”—

“ Nay, nay,” old Angus said, “ not so ;

To Surrey's camp thou now must go,

Thy wrongs no longer smother.

I have two sons in yonder field ;

And, if thou meet'st them under shield,

Upon them bravely—do thy worst ;

And foul fall him that blenches first !”

XIII.

Not far advanced was morning day,

When Marmion did his troop array

To Surrey's camp to ride ;

He had safe conduct for his band,

Beneath the royal seal and hand,

And Douglas gave a guide :

The ancient Earl, with stately grace,

Would Clara on her palfrey place,

And whispered, in an under-tone,
 "Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."
 The train from out the castle drew;
 But Marmion stopped to bid adieu:—
 "Though something I might plain," he said,
 "Of cold respect to stranger guest,
 Sent hither by your king's behest,
 While in Tantallon's towers I stayed;
 Part we in friendship from your land,
 And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
 But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
 Folded his arms, and thus he spoke:—
 "My manors, halls, and bowers, shall still
 Be open at my sovereign's will,
 To each one whom he lists, howe'er
 Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
 My castles are my king's alone,
 From turret to foundation stone—
 The hand of Douglas is his own;
 And never shall in friendly grasp
 The hand of such as Marmion clasp."

XIV.

Burned Marmion's swarthy check like fire,
 And shook his very frame for ire,
 And—"This to me!" he said,—
 "An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
 Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
 To cleave the Douglas' head!
 And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
 He, who does England's message here,
 Although the meanest in her state,
 May well, proud Angus, be thy mate:
 And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
 Even in thy pitch of pride,
 Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,
 (Nay, never look upon your lord,
 And lay your hand upon your sword,)
 I tell thee, thou'rt defied!
 And if thou said'st I am not peer
 To any lord in Scotland here,
 Lowland or Highland, far or near,
 Lord Angus, thou hast lied!"—

On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
 O'ercame the ashen hue of age :
 Fierce he broke forth :—" And dar'st thou then
 To beard the lion in his den,

The Douglas in his hall ?

And hop'st thou hence unscathed to go ?—

No, by Saint Bryde of Bothwell, no !—

Up drawbridge, grooms—what, Warder, ho !

Let the portecullis fall."—

Lord Marmion turned,—well was his need,

And dashed the rowels in his steed,

Like arrow through the archway sprung,

The ponderous grate behind him rung :

To pass there was such scanty room,

The bars, descending, razed his plume.*

XV.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,

Just as it trembled on the rise ;

Not lighter does the swallow skim

Along the smooth lake's level brim :

And when Lord Marmion reached his band,

He halts, and turns with clenched hand,

And shout of loud defiance pours,

And shook his gauntlet at the towers.

* This ebullition of violence in the potent Earl of Angus is not without its example in the real history of the house of Douglas. Maclellan, tutor of Bomby, having refused to acknowledge the pre-eminence claimed by Douglas over the Barons of Galloway, was imprisoned by the Earl, in his castle of the Thieve. Sir Patrick Gray, uncle to the tutor of Bomby, obtained from the King a "sweet letter of supplication," praying the Earl to deliver his prisoner into Gray's hand. When Sir Patrick arrived at the castle, he was received with all due honor; but while he was at dinner, the earl caused his prisoner to be led forth and beheaded. After dinner, Sir Patrick presented the King's letter to the Earl, who led him forth to the green, where the gentleman was lying dead, and said, "Sir Patrick, you are come a little too late; yonder is your sister's son lying, but he wants the head: take his body, and do with it what you will." Sir Patrick answered again with a sore heart, and said, "My lord, if ye have taken from him his head, dispone upon the body as you please:" and with that called for his horse, and when he was on horseback he said to the Earl, "My lord, if I live, you shall be rewarded for your labors, that you have used at this time, according to your demerits." At this the Earl was highly offended, and cried for horse. Sir Patrick, seeing the Earl's fury, spurred his horse, but he was chased near Edinburgh ere they left him

"Horse! horse!" the Douglas cried, "and chase!"
 But soon he reined his fury's pace:
 "A royal messenger he came,
 Though most unworthy of the name.—
 A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
 Did ever knight so foul a deed!
 At first in heart it liked me ill,
 When the king praised his clerkly skill.
 Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
 Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line:
 So swore I, and I swear it still,
 Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
 Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
 Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
 I thought to slay him where he stood.—
 'Tis pity of him, too," he cried;
 "Bold can he speak, and fairly ride;
 I warrant him a warrior tried."—
 With this his mandate he recalls,
 And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI.

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
 Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
 They crossed the heights of Stanrigg-moor.
 His troop more closely there he scann'd,
 And missed the Palmer from the band.—
 "Palmer or not," young Blount did say,
 "He parted at the peep of day;
 Good sooth it was in strange array."
 "In what array?" said Marmion, quick.
 "My lord, I ill can spell the trick;
 But all night long, with clink and bang,
 Close to my couch did hammers clang;
 At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
 And from a loop-hole while I peep,
 Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
 Wrapped in a gown of sables fair,
 As fearful of the morning air;
 Beneath, when that was blown aside,
 A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
 By Archibald worn in bloody work,
 Against the Saracen and Turk.

Last night it hung not in the hall;
 I thought some marvel would befall.
 And next I saw them saddled lead
 Old Cheviot forth, the Earl's best steed;
 A matchless horse, though something old,
 Prompt to his paces, cool and bold.
 I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
 The Earl did much the Master* pray
 To use him on the battle-day;
 But he preferred"—"Nay, Henry, cease!
 Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.
 Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray,
 What did Blount see at break of day?"—

XVII.

"In brief, my lord, we both descried
 (For I then stood by Henry's side)
 The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
 Upon the Earl's own favorite steed;
 All sheathed he was in armor bright,
 And much resembled that same knight
 Subdued by you in Cotswold fight;
 Lord Angus wished him speed."—
 The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
 A sudden light on Marmion broke;—
 "Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!"
 He muttered; "'twas not fay nor ghost,
 I met upon the moonlight wold,
 But living man of earthly mould.—
 O dotage blind and gross!
 Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
 Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
 My path no more to cross.—
 How stand we now?—he told his tale
 To Douglas; and with some avail;
 'Twas therefore gloomed his rugged brow.—
 Will Surrey dare to entertain,
 'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain?
 Small risk of that I trow.—
 Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun;
 Must separate Constance from the Nun—

* His eldest son, the Master of Angus.

O what a tangled web we weave,
 When first we practise to deceive.—
 A Palmer too!—no wonder why
 I felt rebuked beneath his eye:
 I might have known there was but one,
 Whose look could quell Lord Marmion.”

XVIII.

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
 His troop, and reached, at eve, the Tweed,
 Where Lennel's convent closed their march.*
 (There now is left but one frail arch,
 Yet mourn thou not its cells;
 Our time a fair exchange has made;
 Hard by, in hospitable shade,
 A reverend pilgrim dwells,
 Well worth the whole Bernardine brood,
 That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood.)
 Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
 Give Marmion entertainment fair,
 And lodging for his train, and Clare.
 Next morn the Baron climbed the tower,
 To view afar the Scottish power,
 Encamped on Flodden edge:
 The white pavilions made a show,
 Like remnants of the winter snow,
 Along the dusky ridge.
 Long Marmion looked:—at length his eye
 Unusual movement might descry,
 Amid the shifting lines:
 The Scottish host drawn out appears,
 For, flashing on the hedge of spears
 The eastern sunbeam shines.
 Their front now deepening, now extending,
 Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
 Now drawing back, and now descending,
 The skilful Marmion well could know,
 They watched the motions of some foe,
 Who traversed on the plain below.

* This was a Cistercian house of religion, now almost entirely demolished. It is situated near Coldstream, almost opposite to Cornhill, and consequently very near to Flodden Field.

XIX.

Even so it was;—from Flodden ridge
 The Scots beheld the English host
 Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
 And heedful watched them as they crossed
 The Till by Twisel bridge.*

High sight it is, and haughty, while
 They dive into the deep defile;
 Beneath the caverned cliff they fall,
 Beneath the castle's airy wall.

By rock, by oak, by hawthorn tree,
 Troop after troop are disappearing;
 Troop after troop their banners rearing,
 Upon the eastern bank you see.

Still pouring down the rocky den,
 Where flows the sullen Till,
 And rising from the dim-wood glen,
 Standards on standards, men on men,
 In slow succession still,

And sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
 And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
 To gain the opposing hill.

That morn, to many a trumpet-clang,
 Twisel! thy rocks deep echo rang;
 And many a chief of birth and rank,
 Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.

Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
 In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
 Had then from many an axe its doom,
 To give the marching columns room.

* On the evening previous to the memorable battle of Flodden, Surrey's head-quarters were at Barmore-wood, and King James held an inaccessible position on the ridge of Flodden-hill, one of the last and lowest eminences detached from the ridge of Cheviot. The Till, a deep and slow river, winded between the armies. On the morning of the 9th September, 1513, Surrey marched in a north-westerly direction, and, turning eastward, crossed the Till, with his van and artillery, at Twisel-bridge, nigh where that river joins the Tweed, his rear-guard column passing about a mile higher by a ford. This movement had the double effect of placing his army between King James and his supplies from Scotland, and of striking the Scottish monarch with surprise, as he seems to have relied on the depth of the river in his front.

XX.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
 Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
 Since England gains the pass the while,
 And struggles through the deep defile?
 What checks the fiery soul of James?
 Why sits that champion of the Dames
 Inactive on his steed,
 And sees, between him and his land,
 Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
 His host Lord Surrey lead?
 What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand?
 O, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
 Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
 O for one hour of Wallace wight,
 Or well-skilled Bruce to rule the fight,
 And cry—"Saint Andrew and our right!"
 Another sight had seen that morn,
 From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
 And Flodden had been Bannockbourne!—
 The precious hour has passed in vain,
 And England's host has gained the plain;
 Wheeling their march, and circling still,
 Around the base of Flodden-hill.

XXI.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
 Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,—
 "Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
 And see ascending squadrons come
 Between Tweed's river and the hill,
 Foot, horse, and cannon:—hap what hap,
 My basnet to a 'prentice cap,
 Lord Surrey's o'er the Till!
 Yet more! yet more!—how fair arrayed
 They file from out the hawthorn shade,
 And sweep so gallant by!
 With all their banners bravely spread,
 And all their armor flashing high,
 Saint George might waken from the dead,
 To see fair England's standards fly."—
 "Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount; "thou'dst best,
 And listen to our lord's behest."—

With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,—
“This instant be our band arrayed ;
The river must be quickly crossed,
That we may join Lord Surrey’s host.
If fight King James,—as well I trust,
That fight he will, and fight he must,—
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry, while the battle joins.”—

XXII.

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu :
Far less would listen to his prayer,
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And muttered, as the flood they view,
“The pheasant in the falcon’s claw,
He seare will yield to please a daw :
Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
So Clare shall bide with me.”
Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
Where to the Tweed Leat’s eddies creep,
He ventured desperately ;
And not a moment will he bide,
Till squire, or groom, before him ride ;
Headmost of all he stems the tide,
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current’s course,
And though far downward driven perforce,
The southern bank they gain ;
Behind them, straggling, came to shore,
As best they might, the train :
Each o’er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain ;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharmed, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his men arrayed,
Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey’s rear-guard won,
He halted by a cross of stone,

That, on a hillock standing lone,
Did all the field command.

XXIII.

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host, or deadly fray ;*
Their marshalled lines stretched east,
And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation past
From the loud cannon mouth ;
Not in the close successive rattle,
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
But slow and far between.—
The hillock gained, Lord Marmion staid :
“ Here, by this cross,” he gently said,
“ You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare :
O ! think of Marmion in thy prayer !—
Thou wilt not ?—well,—no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
With ten picked archers of my train ;
With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain.—
But, if we conquer, cruel maid !
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
When here we meet again.”—
He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid’s despair,
Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire ; but spurred amain,
And, dashing through the battle-plain,
His way to Surrey took.

XXIV.

“ —The good Lord Marmion, by my life !
Welcome to danger’s hour !

* When the English army, by their skilful counter-march, were fairly placed between King James and his own country, the Scottish monarch resolved to fight ; and, setting fire to his tents, descended from the ridge of Flodden to secure the neighboring eminence of Brankstone, on which that village is built. Thus the two armies met, almost without seeing each other. The English army advanced in four divisions. When the smoke was somewhat dispersed, they perceived the Scots, who had moved down the hill in a similar order of battle, and in deep silence.

Short greeting serves in time of strife:--

Thus have I ranged my power :
 Myself will rule this central host,
 Stout Stanley fronts their right,
 My sons command the vaward post,
 With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight ;*
 Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
 Shall be in rear-ward of the fight,
 And succor those that need it most.

Now, gallant Marmion, well I know
 Would gladly to the vanguard go ;
 Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
 With thee their charge will blithely share ;
 There fight thine own retainers too,
 Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."—
 "Thanks, noble Surrey!" Marmion said,
 Nor further greeting there he paid ;
 But, parting like a thunder-bolt,
 First in the vanguard made a halt,
 Where such a shout there rose
 Of "Marmion! Marmion!" that the cry
 Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
 Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
 With Lady Clare upon the hill ;
 On which, (for far the day was spent,)
 The western sunbeams now were bent.
 The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
 Could plain their distant comrades view .
 Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
 "Unworthy office here to stay !
 No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
 But, see! look up—on Flodden bent,
 The Scottish foe has fired his tent."—
 And sudden, as he spoke,
 From the sharp ridges of the hill,

* Sir Brian Tunstall, called in the romantic language of the time, Tunstall the Undeiled, was one of the few Englishmen of rank slain at Flodden. Perhaps he derived his epithet of *undeiled* from his white armor and banner, as well as from his unstained loyalty and knightly faith. His place of residence was Thurland Castle.

All downward to the banks of Till,
 Was wreathed in sable smoke;
 Volumed and vast, and rolling far,
 The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
 As down the hill they broke;
 Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
 Announced their march; their tread alone,
 At times one warning trumpet blown,
 At times a stifled hum,
 Told England, from his mountain-throne,
 King James did rushing come.—
 Scarce could they hear, or see their foes,
 Until at weapon-point they close.—
 They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
 With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust;
 And such a yell was there,
 Of sudden and portentous birth,
 As if men fought upon the earth,
 And fiends in upper air.
 Long looked the anxious squires; their eye
 Could in the darkness naught descry.

XXVI.

At length the freshening western blast
 Aside the shroud of battle cast;
 And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
 Above the brightening cloud appears;
 And in the smoke the pennons flew,
 As in the storm the white sea-mew.
 Then marked they, dashing broad and far,
 The broken billows of the war,
 And plumed crests of chieftains brave,
 Floating like foam upon the wave;
 But naught distinct they see:
 Wide raged the battle on the plain;
 Spears shook, and falchions flashed amain;
 Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
 Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
 Wild and disorderly.
 Amid the scene of tumult, high
 They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly:
 And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
 And Edmund Howard's lion bright,

Still bear them bravely in the fight;
 Although against them come,
 Of gallant Gordons many a one,
 And many a stubborn Highlandman,
 And many a rugged Border clan,
 With Huntley, and with Home.

XXVII.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
 Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle;
 Though there the western mountaineer
 Rushed with bare bosom on the spear,
 And flung the feeble targe aside,
 And with both hands the broadsword plied:
 'Twas vain.—But Fortune, on the right,
 With fickle smile, cheered Scotland's fight.
 Then fell that spotless banner white,
 The Howard's lion fell;
 Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
 With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
 Around the battle yell.
 The Border slogan rent the sky!
 A Home! a Gordon! was the cry;
 Loud were the clanging blows;
 Advanced,—forced back,—now low, now high,
 The pennon sunk and rose;
 As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
 When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
 It wavered 'mid the foes.
 No longer Blount the view could bear:—
 "By heaven, and all its saints! I swear,
 I will not see it lost!
 Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
 May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
 I gallop to the host."
 And to the fray he rode amain,
 Followed by all the archer train.
 The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
 Made, for a space, an opening large,—
 The rescued banner rose,—
 But darkly closed the war around,
 Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
 It sunk among the foes.

Then Eustace mounted too;—yet staid,
 As loth to leave the helpless maid,
 When, fast as shaft can fly,
 Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
 The loose rein dangling from his head,
 Housing and saddle bloody red,
 Lord Marmion's steed rushed by;
 And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
 A look and sign to Clara cast,
 To mark he would return in haste,
 Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
 Left in that dreadful hour alone:
 Perchance her reason stoops, or reels;
 Perchance a courage, not her own,
 Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
 The scattered van of England wheels;
 She only said, as loud in air
 The tumult roared, "Is Wilton there?"—
 They fly, or, maddened by despair,
 Fight but to die.—"Is Wilton there?"
 With that, straight up the hill there rode
 Two horsemen drenched with gore,
 And in their arms, a helpless load,
 A wounded knight they bore.
 His hand still strained the broken brand;
 His arms were smeared with blood and sand:
 Dragged from among the horses' feet,
 With dented shield, and helmet beat,
 The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
 Can that be haughty Marmion!
 Young Blount his armor did unlace,
 And, gazing on his ghastly face,
 Said—"By Saint George, he's gone!
 That spear-wound has our master sped,
 And see the deep cut on his head!
 Good-night to Marmion."—
 "Unnurtured Blount!—thy brawling cease:
 He opes his eyes," said Eustace; "peace!"—

XXIX.

When, doffed his casque, he felt free air,
 Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare:—
 “Where's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace where?
 Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
 Redeem my pennon,—charge again!
 Cry—‘Marmion to the rescue!’—Vain!
 Last of my race, on battle plain
 That shout shall ne'er be heard again!—
 Yet my last thought is England's:—fly,
 To Daere bear my signet-ring;
 Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
 Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie:
 Tunstall lies dead upon the field;
 His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
 Edmund is down;—my life is reft;—
 The Admiral alone is left.
 Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
 With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
 Full upon Scotland's central host,
 Or victory and England's lost.—
 Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets! fly!
 Leave Marmion here alone—to die.”
 They parted, and alone he lay:
 Clare drew her from the sight away,
 Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
 And half he murmured,—“Is there none,
 Of all my halls have nurst,
 Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
 Of blessed water from the spring,
 To slake my dying thirst?”

XXX.

O, woman! in our hours of ease,
 Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
 And variable as the shade
 By the light quivering aspen made;
 When pain and anguish wring the brow,
 A ministering angel thou!—
 Scarce were the piteous accents said,
 When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
 To the nigh streamlet ran:

Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
 The plaintive voice alone she hears,
 Sees but the dying man.
 She stooped her by the runnel's side,
 But in abhorrence backward drew;
 For, oozing from the mountain wide,
 Where raged the war, a dark red tide
 Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
 Where shall she turn!—behold her mark
 A little fountain-cell,
 Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
 In a stone basin fell.
 Above, some half-worn letters say,
 "Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray,
 For the kind soul of Sybil, Greg,
 Who built this cross and well."
 She filled the helm, and back she hied,
 And with surprise and joy espied
 A Monk supporting Marmion's head:
 A pious man, whom duty brought
 To dubious verge of battle fought,
 To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
 And, as she stooped his brow to lave—
 "Is it the hand of Clare," he said,
 "Or injured Constance, bathes my head?"
 Then, as remembrance rose,—
 "Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
 I must redress her woes.
 Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
 Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!"—
 "Alas!" she said, "the while,—
 O think of your immortal weal!
 In vain for Constance is your zeal;
 She——died at Holy Isle."—
 Lord Marmion started from the ground,
 As light as if he felt no wound;
 Though in the action burst the tide,
 In torrents, from his wounded side.
 "Then it was truth," he said—"I knew
 That the dark presage must be true.—

I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,

Would spare me but a day!

For, wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar stone,

Might bribe him for delay.

It may not be!—this dizzy trance—

Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!

“A sinful heart makes feeble hand.”—

Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling Monk.

XXXII.

With fruitless labor, Clara bound
And strove to stanch the gushing wound:

The Monk, with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church's prayers;

Ever, he said, that, close and near,

A lady's voice was in his ear,

And that the priest he could not hear,

For that she ever sung,

“*In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!*”

So the notes rung;

“Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel hand,
Shake not the dying sinner's sand!—

O look, my son, upon yon sign

Of the Redeemer's grace divine;

O, think on faith and bliss!—

By many a death-bed I have been,

And many a sinner's parting seen,

But never aught like this.”—

The war, that for a space did fail,

Now trebly thundering swelled the gale,

And—STANLEY! was the cry;—

A light on Marmion's visage spread,

And fired his glazing eye:

With dying hand, above his head

He shook the fragment of his blade,

And shouted “Victory!—

Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!”

Were the last words of Marmion.

XXXIII.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
 Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
 For still the Scots, around their king,
 Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
 Where's now their victor vaward wing,
 Where Huntley, and where Home?—
 O for a blast of that dread horn,
 On Fontarabian echoes borne,
 That to King Charles did come,
 When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
 And every paladin and peer,
 On Roncesvalles died!
 Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
 To quit the plunder of the slain,
 And turn the doubtful day again,
 While yet on Flodden side,
 Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
 And round it toils and bleeds and dies,
 Our Caledonian pride!
 In vain the wish—for far away,
 While spoil and havoc mark their way,
 Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
 “O Lady,” cried the Monk, “away!”—
 And placed her on her steed;
 And led her to the chapel fair,
 Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.
 There all the night they spent in prayer,
 And, at the dawn of morning, there
 She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV.

But, as they left the dark'ning heath,
 More desperate grew the strife of death.
 The English shafts in volleys hailed,
 In headlong charge their horse assailed:
 Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep,
 To break the Scottish circle deep,
 That fought around their king.
 But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
 Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
 Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow.
 Unbroken was the ring;

The stubborn spearmen still made good
 Their dark impenetrable wood,
 Each stepping where his comrade stood,
 The instant that he fell.
 No thought was there of dastard flight;—
 Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
 Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
 As fearlessly and well;
 Till utter darkness closed her wing
 O'er their thin host and wounded king.
 Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
 Led back from strife his shattered bands;
 And from the charge they drew,
 As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
 Sweep back to ocean blue.
 Then did their loss his foemen know;
 Their king, their lords, their mightiest low,
 They melted from the field as snow,
 When streams are swollen and south winds blow,
 Dissolves in silent dew.
 Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
 While many a broken band,
 Disordered, through her currents dash
 To gain the Scottish land;
 To town and tower, to down and dale,
 To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
 And raise the universal wail.
 Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
 Shall many an age that wail prolong:
 Still from the sire the son shall hear
 Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
 Of Flodden's fatal field,
 Where shivered was fair Scotland's spear,
 And broken was her shield!

XXXV.

Day dawns upon the mountain's side:—
 There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,
 Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one;
 The sad survivors all are gone.—
 View not that corpse mistrustfully,
 Defaced and mangled though it be;
 Nor to yon Border castle high

Look northward with upbraiding eye ;
 Nor cherish hope in vain,
 That, journeying far on foreign strand,
 The Royal Pilgrim to his land
 May yet return again.
 He saw the wreck his rashness wrought ;
 Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
 And fell on Flodden plain :*
 And well in death his trusty brand,
 Firm clenched within his manly hand,
 Beseemed the monarch slain.
 But, O! how changed since yon blithe night.—
 Gladly I turn me from the sight,
 Unto my tale again.

XXXVI.

Short is my tale:—Fitz-Eustace' care
 A pierced and mangled body bare
 To moated Lichfield's lofty pile ;
 And there, beneath the southern aisle,
 A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
 Did long Lord Marmion's image bear.
 (Now vainly for its site you look ;
 'Twas levelled, when fanatic Brook
 The fair cathedral stormed and took ;†
 But, thanks to heaven, and good Saint Chad,

* There can be no doubt that King James fell in the battle of Flodden. He was killed, says the curious French Gazette, within a lance's length of the Earl of Surrey ; and the same account adds, that none of his division were made prisoners, though many were killed ; a circumstance that testifies the desperation of their resistance. The Scottish historians record many of the idle reports which passed among the vulgar of their day. Home was accused, by the popular voice, not only of failing to support the king, but even of having carried him out of the field, and murdered him. Other reports gave a still more romantic turn to the king's fate, and averred, that James, weary of greatness after the carnage among his nobles, had gone on a pilgrimage to merit absolution for the death of his father, and the breach of his oath of amity to Henry.

† This storm of Lichfield cathedral, which had been garrisoned on the part of the king, took place in the great civil war. Lord Brook, who, with Sir John Gill, commanded the assailants, was shot with a musket-ball through the visor of his helmet. The royalists remarked, that he was killed by a shot fired from St. Chad's Cathedral, and upon St. Chad's day, and received his death-wound in the very eye with which, he had said, he hoped to see the ruin of all the cathedrals in England.

A guerdon meet the spoiler had !
 There erst was martial Marmion found,
 His feet upon a couchant hound,
 His hands to heaven upraised ;
 And all around, on scutcheon rich,
 And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
 His arms and feats were blazed.
 And yet, though all was carved so fair,
 And priests for Marmion breathed a prayer,
 The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
 From Ettrick woods, a peasant swain
 Followed his lord to Flodden plain,—
 One of those flowers, whom plaintive lay
 In Scotland mourns as “wede away :”
 Sore wounded, Sybil’s cross he spied,
 And dragged him to its foot, and died,
 Close by the noble Marmion’s side.
 The spoilers stripped and gashed the slain,
 And thus their corpses were mista’en ;
 And thus, in the proud Baron’s tomb,
 The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII.

Less easy task it were, to show
 Lord Marmion’s nameless grave, and low.
 They dug his grave e’en where he lay,
 But every mark is gone ;
 Time’s wasting hand has done away
 The simple Cross of Sybil Grey,
 And broke her font of stone ;
 But yet from out the little hill
 Oozes the slender springlet still.
 Oft halts the stranger there,
 For thence may best his curious ey
 The memorable field desery ;
 And shepherd boys repair
 To seek the water-flag and rush,
 And rest them by the hazel bush,
 And plait their garlands fair ;
 Nor dream they sit upon the grave,
 That holds the bones of Marmion brave.—
 When thou shalt find the little hill,
 With thy heart commune, and be still.

If ever, in temptation strong,
 Thou left'st the right path for the wrong;
 If every devious step, thus trode,
 Still led thee farther from the road;
 Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom
 On noble Marmion's lowly tomb;
 But say, "He died a gallant knight,
 With sword in hand, for England's right."

XXXVIII.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
 Who cannot image to himself,
 That all through Flodden's dismal night,
 Wilton was foremost in the fight;
 That when brave Surrey's steed was slain,
 'Twas Wilton mounted him again;
 'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hewed,
 Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood:
 Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,
 He was the living soul of all;
 That, after fight, his faith made plain,
 He won his rank and lands again;
 And charged his old paternal shield
 With bearings won on Flodden Field.—
 Nor sing I to that simple maid,
 To whom it must in terms be said,
 That king and kinsmen did agree,
 To bless fair Clara's constancy;
 Who cannot, unless I relate,
 Paint to her mind the bridal's state;
 That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke;
 More, Sands, and Denny, passed the joke;
 That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
 And Catherine's hand the stocking threw;
 And afterwards, for many a day,
 That it was held enough to say,
 In blessing to a wedded pair,
 "Love they like Wilton and like Clare!"

L'Enbooy.

TO THE READER.

WHY then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song,
Unless to bid the gentles speed,
Who long have listed to my rede ?*—
The Statesmen grave, if such may deign
To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
And patriotic heart—as PITT !
A garland for the hero's crest,
And twined by her he loves the best ;
To every lovely lady bright,
What can I wish but faithful knight ?
To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true ?
And knowledge to the studious sage ;
And pillow soft to head of age.
To thee, dear schoolboy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task, and merry holiday !
To all, to each, a fair good-night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light.

* Used generally for *tale*, or *discourses*.



THE
LADY OF THE LAKE.

A POEM, IN SIX CANTOS.

TO
THE MOST NOBLE
JOHN JAMES, MARQUIS OF ABERCORN,
ETC., ETC., ETC.,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.



ARGUMENT.

The scene of the following Poem is chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the West Highlands of Perthshire. The time of action includes six days, and the transactions of each day occupy a Canto.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIRST.

The Chase.

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string,—
O minstrel Harp! still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued the proud.
At each according pause, was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's
matchless eye.

Oh wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
Oh wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,

And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I.

THE stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II.

As chief who hears his warder call,
"To arms! the foeman storm the wall!"
The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprang from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appeared,
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

Yelled on the view the opening pack,
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,

Clattered a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rang out,
A hundred voices joined the shout ;
With hark, and whoop, and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cowered the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken,
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV.

Less loud the sounds of silvan war
Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern where 'tis told
A giant made his den of old ;*
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in the pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stayed perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse ;
And of the trackers of the deer,
Scarce half the lessening pack was near ;
So shrewdly, on the mountain side,
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V.

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow
Where broad extended far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wandered o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.

* Ua-var, or *Uaighmor*, is a mountain to the northeast of Callender, Stirlingshire. The name signifies a great den or cavern ; and that small inclosure, or recess referred to, is surrounded with large rocks, and open above head. It is situated on the south side, and is supposed by the old sportsmen in the neighborhood, to have been a toil for deer

But nearer was the copsewood gray
 That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
 And mingled with the pine-trees blue
 On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
 Fresh vigor with the hope returned,
 With flying foot the heath he spurned,
 Held westward with unwearied race,
 And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
 As swept the hunt through Cambus-more;
 What reins were tightened in despair,
 When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
 Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
 Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith,—
 For twice, that day, from shore to shore,
 The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
 Few were the stragglers, following far,
 That reached the lake of Vennachar;
 And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
 The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
 That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
 For, jaded now, and spent with toil,
 Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
 While every gasp with sobs he drew,
 The laboring stag strained full in view.
 Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,*
 Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
 Fast on his flying traces came,
 And all but won that desperate game;
 For, scarce a spear's length from his launch,
 Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds stanch;
 Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
 Nor farther might the quarry strain.
 Thus up the margin of the lake,

* Bloodhounds bred by the Abbots of St. Hubert, which were of remarkable strength, swiftness, and keenness of scent, and therefore greatly prized in hunting.

Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII.

The hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound, and death-halloo,
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew;*
But, thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosach's wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couched, the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild-flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX.

Close on the hounds the hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanished game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labors o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touched with pity and remorse,
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse:—
“I little thought, when first thy rein
I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!

* When the stag turned to bay, the ancient hunter had the perilous task of going in upon, and killing or disabling the desperate animal.

Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant gray!"

X.

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase:
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seemed an answering blast;
And on the hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day;
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it showed

XI.

The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
Their rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,

Nor lacked they many a banner fair ;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrops' sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII.

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there ;
The primrose pale, and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower ;
Fox-glove and night-shade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath ;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock ;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue ;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim,
As served the wild-duck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace ;

And farther as the hunter strayed,
 Still broader sweep its channels made.
 The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
 Emerging from entangled wood,
 But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,
 Like castle girdled with its moat;
 Yet broader floods extending still,
 Divide them from their parent hill,
 Till each, retiring, claims to be
 An islet in an inland sea.

XIV.

And now, to issue from the glen,
 No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
 Unless he climb, with footing nice,
 A far projecting precipice.*
 The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
 The hazel saplings lent their aid;
 And thus an airy point he won,
 Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
 One burnished sheet of living gold,
 Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
 In all her length far winding lay,
 With promontory, creek, and bay,
 And islands that, empurpled bright,
 Floated amid the livelier light;
 And mountains, that like giants stand,
 To sentinel enchanted land.
 High on the south, huge Benvenue
 Down on the lake in masses threw
 Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,
 The fragments of an earlier world;
 A wildering forest feathered o'er
 His ruined sides and summit hoar,
 While on the north, through middle air,
 Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV.

From the steep promontory gazed
 The stranger, raptured and amazed;

* Until the present road was made through this romantic pass, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile called the Trosachs, except by a sort of ladder, composed of the branches and roots of the trees.

And, "What a scene was here," he cried,
"For princely pomp, or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister gray.
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn!
How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still and mute!
And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matin's distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell!—
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewildered stranger call
To friendly feast, and lighted hall.

XVI.

"Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now—beshrew yon nimble deer,—
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that—the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place;—
A summer night, in greenwood spent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment;
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better missed than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.*
I am alone;—my bugle strain
May call some straggler of the train;

* The clans in the neighborhood of Loch Katrine, from their proximity to the Lowlands, were among the most warlike and predatory of the Highlanders.

Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried."

XVII.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel, guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep,
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping-willow twig to lave;
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touched this silver strand,
Just as the hunter left his stand,
And stood concealed amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain,
With head up-raised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art.
In listening mood, she seemed to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow;
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;

E'en the slight hare-bell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread :
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear.

XIX.

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid ;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing ;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye ;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confessed
The guileless movements of her breast ;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claimed a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the north.
One only passion, unrevealed,
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame ;—
Oh need I tell that passion's name !

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne :—
“ Father !” she cried ; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
A while she paused, no answer came,—
“ Malcolm, was thine the blast ?” the name

Less resolutely uttered fell,
 The echoes could not catch the swell.
 "A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
 Advancing from the hazel shade.
 The maid alarmed, with hasty oar,
 Pushed her light shallop from the shore,
 And, when a space was gained between,
 Closer she drew her bosom's screen;
 (So forth the startled swan would swing,
 So turn to prune his ruffled wing.)
 Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
 She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
 Not his the form, nor his the eye,
 That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI.

On his bold visage middle age
 Had slightly pressed its signet sage,
 Yet had not quenched the open truth,
 And fiery vehemence of youth;
 Forward and frolic glee was there,
 The will to do, the soul to dare,
 The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
 Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
 His limbs were cast in manly mould,
 For hardy sports, or contest bold;
 And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
 And weaponless, except his blade,
 His stately mien as well implied
 A high-born heart, a martial pride,
 As if a Baron's crest he wore,
 And sheathed in armor trod the shore.
 Slighting the petty need he showed,
 He told of his benighted road:
 His ready speech flowed fair and free,
 In phrase of gentlest courtesy;
 Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland,
 Less used to sue than to command.

XXII.

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
 And, reassured, at last replied,
 That Highland halls were open still

To wildered wanderers of the hill.
 "Nor think you unexpected come
 To yon lone isle, our desert home :
 Before the heath had lost the dew,
 This morn a couch was pulled for you ;
 On yonder mountain's purple head
 Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
 And our broad nets have swept the mere,
 To furnish forth your evening cheer."
 "Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
 Your courtesy has erred," he said ;
 "No right have I to claim, misplaced,
 The welcome of expected guest.
 A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
 My way, my friends, my courser lost,
 I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
 Have ever drawn your mountain air,
 Till on this lake's romantic strand,
 I found a fay in fairy land."

XXIII.

"I well believe," the maid replied,
 As her light skiff approached the side—
 "I well believe, that ne'er before
 Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore,
 But yet, as far as yesternight,
 Old Allan-Bane foretold your plight—
 A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
 Was on the visioned future bent.*
 He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
 Lie dead beneath the birchen way ;
 Painted exact your form and mien,
 Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
 That tassell'd horn so gayly gilt,
 That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
 That cap with heron's plumage trim,
 And you two hounds so dark and grim.

* A superstitious belief in *second sight* prevailed in the Highlands: it was called in Gaelic *Taishitaraugh*, from *Taish*, an unreal or shadowy appearance; and those possessed of the faculty are called *Taishatrin*, which may be aptly translated *visionaries*. They pretended to see visions, and to be informed of future events, which obtained for them an extraordinary influence over their countrymen.

He bade that all should ready be,
 To grace a guest of fair degree;
 But light I held his prophecy,
 And deemed it was my father's horn,
 Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."

XXIV.

The stranger smiled:—"Since to your home,
 A destined errant-knight I come,
 Announced by prophet sooth and old,
 Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
 I'll lightly front each high emprise,
 For one kind glance of those bright eyes:
 Permit me, first, the task to guide
 Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
 The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
 The toil unwonted saw him try;
 For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
 His noble hand had grasped an oar:
 Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
 And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
 With heads erect and whimpering cry,
 The hounds behind their passage ply.
 Nor frequent does the bright oar break
 The darkening mirror of the lake,
 Until the rocky isle they reach,
 And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV.

The stranger viewed the shore around;
 'Twas all so close with copse-wood bound,
 Nor track nor pathway might declare
 That human foot frequented there,
 Until the mountain-maiden showed
 A clambering, unsuspected road,
 That winded through the tangled screen,
 And opened on a narrow green,
 Where weeping birch and willow round
 With their long fibres swept the ground.
 Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
 Some chief had framed a rustic bower.*

* In these turbulent times the Celtic chieftain had usually some place of retreat for the hour of necessity, which, as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut in a strong and secluded situation.

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials, as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss, and clay, and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees, overhead,
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And withered heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favored flower,
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she staid,
And gayly to the stranger said,
"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!"

XXVII.

"My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee."
He crossed the threshold—and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
When on the floor he saw displayed,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase:

A target there, a bugle here,
 A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
 And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
 With the tusked trophies of the boar.
 Here grins the wolf as when he died,
 And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
 The frontlet of the elk adorns,
 Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
 Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
 That blackening streaks of blood retained,
 And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
 With otter's fur and seal's unite,
 In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
 To garnish forth the silvan hall.

XXVIII.

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
 And next the fallen weapon raised;
 Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
 Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
 And as the brand he poised and swayed,
 "I never knew but one," he said,
 "Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
 A blade like this in battle-field."
 She sighed, then smiled and took the word:
 "You see the guardian champion's sword:
 As light it trembles in his hand,
 As in my grasp a hazel wand;
 My sire's tall form might grace the part
 Of Ferragus, or Asebart;*
 But in the absent giant's hold
 Are women now, and menials old.'

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
 Mature of age, a graceful dame;
 Whose easy step and stately port
 Had well become a princely court,
 To whom, though more than kindred knew,

* The first of these giants is well known to the admirers of Ariosto, by the name of Ferrau. He was an antagonist of Orlando, and was slain by him in single combat. Asepart, or Asebart, makes a very material figure in the history of Bevis of Hampton, by whom he was conquered.

Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unasked his birth and name.*
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names—
"The Knight of Snowdown, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wandered here."

XXX.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire;
Well showed the elder lady's mien,
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks displayed
The simple grace of silvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Showed she was come of gentle race;
"Twere strange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdown gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turned all inquiry light away.
"Weird women we! by dale and down,
We dwell afar from tower and town.

* This refers to the practice which existed of never asking a stranger his name or lineage, before he had taken refreshment; as the feuds which were so frequent among them might have excluded the guest from the benefit of the assistance he stood in need of, if a contrary rule had been allowed.

We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
 On wandering knights our spells we cast;
 While viewless minstrels touch the string,
 'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."
 She sang, and still a harp unseen
 Filled up the symphony between.*

XXXI.

SONG.

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
 Dream of battled fields no more,
 Days of danger, nights of waking.
 In our isle's enchanted hall,
 Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
 Fairy strains of music fall,
 Every sense in slumber dewing.
 Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Dream of fighting fields no more;
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
 Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

"No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
 Armor's clang or war-steed champing,
 Trump nor pibroch summon here
 Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
 Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
 At the daybreak from the fallow,
 And the bittern sound his drum,
 Booming from the sedgy shallow.
 Ruder sounds shall none be near,
 Guards nor warders challenge here,
 Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
 Shouting clans or squadrons stamping."

XXXII.

She paused—then, blushing, led the lay
 To grace the stranger of the day;
 Her mellow notes awhile prolong
 The cadence of the flowing song,

* The Highlanders delighted much in music, and harpers were received as welcome guests, in the Highlands of Scotland, until the end of the sixteenth century.

Till to her lips in measured frame,
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

song—continued.

“Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillé.”

XXXIII.

The hall was cleared—the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes—
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honor's lost.
Then—from my couch may heavenly might
Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident, undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged;
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view,

Oh, were his senses false or true!
 Dreamed he of death or broken vow,
 Or is it all a vision now!

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove
 He seemed to walk, and speak of love;
 She listened with a blush and sigh;
 His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
 He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
 And a cold gauntlet met his grasp;
 The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
 Upon its head a helmet shone;
 Slowly enlarged to giant size,
 With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
 The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
 To Ellen still a likeness bore.
 He woke, and, panting with affright,
 Recalled the vision of the night.
 The hearth's decaying brands were red,
 And deep and dusky lustre shed,
 Half showing, half concealing all
 The uncouth trophies of the hall.
 Mid those the stranger fixed his eye,
 Where that huge falchion hung on high.
 And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
 Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
 Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
 He rose, and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV.

The wild-rose, eglantine, and broom,
 Wafted around their rich perfume;
 The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
 The aspens slept beneath the calm;
 The silver light, with quivering glance,
 Played on the water's still expanse—
 Wild were the heart whose passions' sway
 Could rage beneath the sober ray!
 He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
 While thus he communed with his breast:—
 "Why is it at each turn I trace
 Some memory of that exiled race?"

Can I not mountain maiden spy,
 But she must bear the Douglas eye?
 Can I not view a Highland brand,
 But it must match the Douglas hand?
 Can I not frame a fevered dream,
 But still the Douglas is the theme?—
 I'll dream no more—by manly mind
 Not even in sleep is will resigned.
 My midnight orison said o'er,
 I'll turn to rest, and dream no more."
 His midnight orison he told,
 A prayer with every bead of gold,
 Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
 And sank in undisturbed repose;
 Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
 And morning dawned on Ben-venue.

CANTO SECOND.

The Island.

I.

At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
 'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
 All nature's children feel the matin spring
 Of life reviving, with reviving day;
 And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
 Wafting the stranger on his way again,
 Morn's genial influence roused a Minstrel gray,*
 And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
 Mix'd with the sounding harp, O white-haired Allan-
 Bane!

* Highland chieftains, to a late period, retained in their service the bard, as a family officer. The bard was the historian and genealogist of the clan, besides being the domestic musician of the chief, and sometimes the preceptor of the young laird.

II.

SONG.

“ Not faster yonder rowers’ might
 Flings from their oars the spray,
 Not faster yonder rippling bright,
 That tracks the shallop’s course in light,
 Melts in the lake away,
 Than men from memory erase
 The benefits of former days ;
 Then, Stranger, go ! good speed the while,
 Nor think again of the lonely isle.

“ High place to thee in royal court,
 High place in battled line,
 Good hawk and hound for silvan sport,
 Where Beauty sees the brave resort,
 The honored meed be thine !
 True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
 Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
 And lost in love’s and friendship’s smile,
 Be memory of the lonely isle.

III.

SONG—continued.

“ But if beneath yon southern sky
 A plaided stranger roam,
 Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
 And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
 Pine for his Highland home ;
 Then, warrior, then be thine to show
 The care that soothes a wanderer’s woe ;
 Remember then thy hap erewhile
 A stranger in the lonely isle.

“ Or if on life’s uncertain main
 Mishap shall mar thy sail ;
 If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
 Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
 Beneath the fickle gale ;
 Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
 On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
 But come where kindred worth shall smile
 To greet thee in the lonely isle.”

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reached the mainland side,
And ere his onward way he took,
The stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach
The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, gray, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seemed watching the awakening fire ;
So still he sate, as those who wait
Till judgment speak the doom of fate ;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair ;
So still, as life itself were fled,
In the last sound his harp had sped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sate and smiled.
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vexed spaniel, from the beach,
Bayed at the prize beyond his reach ?
Yet tell me then the maid who knows,
Why deepened on her cheek the rose ?—
Forgive, forgive, Fidelity !
Perchance the maiden smiled to see
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And stop and turn to wave anew ;
And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
Show me the fair would scorn to spy
And prize such conquest of her eye !

VI.

While yet he loitered on the spot,
It seemed as Ellen marked him not,

But when he turned him to the glade,
 One courteous parting sign she made;
 And after, oft the knight would say,
 That not when prize of festal day
 Was dealt him by the brightest fair,
 Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
 So highly did his bosom swell,
 As at that simple mute farewell.
 Now with a trusty mountain guide,
 And his dark staghounds by his side,
 He parts—the maid, 'unconscious still,
 Watched him wind slowly round the hill;
 But when his stately form was hid,
 The guardian in her bosom chid—
 "Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!"
 'Twas thus upbraiding conscience said;
 "Not so had Malcolm idly hung
 On the smooth phrase of southern tongue;
 Not so had Malcolm strained his eye
 Another step than thine to spy."
 "Wake, Allan-Bane!" aloud she cried,
 To the old Minstrel by her side,
 "Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
 I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
 And warm thee with a noble name;
 Pour forth the glory of the Græme."*
 Scarce from her lip the word had rushed,
 When deep the conscious maiden blushed,
 For of his clan, in hall and bower,
 Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII.

The Minstrel waked his harp—three times
 Arose the well-known martial chimes,
 And thrice their high heroic pride

* This ancient and powerful family held extensive possessions in the counties of Dunbarton and Stirling. Few families can boast of more historical renown, having claim to three of the most remarkable characters in the Scottish annals. Sir John the Græme, the faithful and undaunted compatriot of Wallace, who fell in the unfortunate field of Falkirk, in 1298. The celebrated Marquis of Montrose, in whom De Retz saw realized his abstract idea of the heroes of antiquity. And John Grahame of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, who fell in the arms of victory.

In melancholy murmurs died.
“Vainly thou bid'st, O noble maid!”
Clasping his withered hands, he said,
“Vainly thou bid'st me wake the strain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned;
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe;
And the proud march, which victors tread,
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
O well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneful fathers said,
This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII.

“But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed
The eve thy sainted mother died;
And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call,
Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall,
Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.*
Oh! if yet worse mishap and woe
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair,
Brood in these accents of despair,

* The downfall of the Douglasses of the house of Angus, during the reign of James V., 1528, is the event alluded to in the text. The Earl of Angus had married the Queen Dowager, and availing himself of the right which he thus acquired, as well as of his extensive power, he retained the king in a sort of tutelage, which approached very near to captivity. This treatment so exasperated the youthful and chivalrous king, that, when he effected his escape to Stirling Castle, he swore, in his anger, that no Douglas should, while he lived and reigned, find favor or countenance in Scotland; and he followed out his revenge with such an inveterate hatred, that even their nearest friends, in the remotest parts of Scotland, durst not entertain them, unless under the strictest and closest disguise.

No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
 Triumph or rapture from thy string;
 One short, one final strain shall flow,
 Fraught with unutterable woe,
 Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
 Thy master cast him down and die!"

IX.

Soothing she answered him, "Assuage,
 Mine honored friend, the fears of age;
 All melodies to thee are known,
 That harp has rung, or pipe has blown,
 In Lowland vale, or Highland glen,
 From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,
 At times, unbidden notes should rise,
 Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
 Entangling, as they rush along,
 The war-march with the funeral song?
 Small ground is now for boding fear;
 Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
 My sire, in native virtue great,
 Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
 Not then to fortune more resigned,
 Than yonder oak might give the wind;
 The graceful foliage storms may reave,
 The noble stem they cannot grieve.
 For me"—she stooped, and, looking round,
 Plucked a blue hare-bell from the ground,—
 "For me, whose memory scarce conveys
 An image of more splendid days,
 This little flower, that loves the lea,
 May well my simple emblem be;
 It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
 That in the king's own garden grows,
 And when I place it in my hair,
 Allan, a bard is bound to swear
 He ne'er saw coronet so fair."
 Then playfully the chaplet wild
 She wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
 Wiled the old harper's mood away.

With such a look as hermits throw
 When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
 He gazed, till fond regret and pride
 Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied:
 "Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
 The rank, the honors thou hast lost!
 Oh might I live to see thee grace,
 In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
 To see my favorite's step advance,
 The lightest in the courtly dance,
 The cause of every gallant's sigh,
 And leading star of every eye,
 And theme of every minstrel's art,
 The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!"*

XI.

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried.
 (Light was her accent, yet she sighed;)
 "Yet is this mossy rock to me
 Worth splendid chair and canopy;
 Nor would my footsteps spring more gay
 In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
 Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
 To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
 And then for suitors proud and high,
 To bend before my conquering eye,
 Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
 That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
 The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
 The terror of Loch Lomond's side,
 Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
 A Lennox foray—for a day."

XII.

The ancient bard his glee repressed:
 "I'll hast thou chosen theme for jest!
 For who, through all this western wild,
 Named black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled?
 In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;†
 I saw, when back the dirk he drew,

* The well-known cognizance of the Douglas family.

† This was no uncommon occurrence in the court of Scotland; and ever the royal presence scarcely restrained the ferocious feuds which were the perpetual source of bloodshed among the Scottish nobility.

Courtiers give place before the stride
 Of the undaunted homicide ;
 And since, though outlawed, hath his hand
 Full sternly kept his mountain land.
 Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
 That I such hated truth should say—
 The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
 Disowned by every noble peer,
 Even the rude refuge we have here ?
 Alas, this wild marauding Chief
 Alone might hazard our relief,
 And now thy maiden charms expand,
 Looks for his guerdon in thy hand ;
 Full soon may dispensation sought,
 To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
 Then, though an exile on the hill,
 Thy father, as the Douglas, still
 Be held in reverence and fear.
 But though to Roderick thou'rt so dear,
 That thou might'st guide with silken thread,
 Slave at thy will, this chieftain dread ;
 Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
 Thy hand is on a lion's mane."

XIII.

"Minstrel," the maid replied, and high
 Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
 "My debts to Roderick's house I know :
 All that a mother could bestow,
 To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
 Since first an orphan in the wild,
 She sorrowed o'er her sister's child ;
 To her brave chieftain son, from ire
 Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
 A deeper, holier debt is owed ;
 And, could I pay it with my blood,
 Allan! Sir Roderick should command
 My blood, my life—but not my hand.
 Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
 A votaress in Maronan's cell ;*

* The parish of Kilmaronock, at the eastern extremity of Loch Lomond, derives its name from a cell or chapel, dedicated to Saint Maronoch, or Maronan, about whose sanctity very little is now remembered.

Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV.

“Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses gray—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave;*
And generous—save vindictive mood,
Or jealous transport chafe his blood:
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand:
But oh! that very blade of steel
More mercy for a foe would feel:
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind,
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand, that for my father fought,
I honor, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red,
From peasants slaughtered in their shed?
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high,
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
While yet a child—and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe—
I shuddered at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid, and sable plume;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air;
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,

* This is a beautiful cascade made at a place called the Bridge of Bracklinn, by a mountain stream called the Keltie, about a mile from the village of Calander in Menteith.

In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
 I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
 A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
 To change such odious theme were best,—
 What think'st thou of our stranger guest?"

XV.

"What think I of him?—woe the while
 That brought such wanderer to our isle!
 Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
 For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,*
 What time he leagued, no longer foes,
 His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
 Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
 The footstep of a secret foe.†
 If courtly spy, and harbored here,
 What may we for the Douglas fear?
 What for this island, deemed of old
 Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
 If neither spy nor foe, I pray
 What yet may jealous Roderick say!
 —Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!
 Bethink thee of the discord dread
 That kindled, when at Beltane game
 Thou led'st the dance with Malcolm Græme;
 Still, though thy sire the peace renewed,
 Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud;
 Beware!—But hark, what sounds are these?
 My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
 No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
 Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
 Still is the canna's‡ hoary beard,
 Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—

* Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises, that he acquired the epithet of TINEMAN, because he *tined* or lost his followers in every battle which he fought. He was made prisoner by Hotspur in the bloody battle of Homildon-hill near Wooler, and he afterwards fell at the battle of Verneuil with the flower of the Scottish chivalry, then serving as auxiliaries in France, and about two thousand common soldiers, A. D. 1424.

† It was a superstitious belief, that enchanted swords possessed the power of leaping out of their scabbards, to indicate the presence of an enemy

‡ Cotton-grass.

And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar.”

XVI.

Far up the lengthened lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steered full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they passed,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's bannered pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave.
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters* down, and sweep
The furrowed bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.†
At first the sound, by distance tame,
Mellowed along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,

* The drone of the bagpipe.

† The connoisseurs in pipe-music affect to discover in a well-composed pibroch, the imitative sounds of march, conflict, flight, pursuit, and all the “current of a heady fight.” It began with a grave motion, resembling a march; then gradually quickened into the onset; ran off with noisy confusion, and turbulent rapidity, to imitate the conflict and pursuit; then swelled into a few flourishes of triumphant joy; and perhaps closed with the wild and slow wailings of a funeral procession.

Wailed every harsher note away ;
Then, bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear ;
Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And, hurrying at the signal dread,
The battered earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Expressed their merry marching on,
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows ;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarred ;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yelled amain ;
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain ; but slow,
Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell,
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceased ; but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still ;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud a hundred clansmen raise
Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With measured sweep the burden bore,
In such wild cadence, as the breeze
Makes through December's leafless trees.
The chorus first could Allan know,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine, ho ! ieroe !"
And near, and nearer as they rowed,
Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX.

BOAT SONG.

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
 Honored and blessed be the ever-green Pine!
 Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gayly to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
 While every Highland glen
 Sends our shout back agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"*

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
 When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf or the
 mountain,
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
 Moored in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
 Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
 Echo his praise agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XX.

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
 And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied;
 Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
 And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.†

* Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in his intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan, and commonly another peculiar to himself, which distinguished him from the chieftains of the same race. This was sometimes derived from complexion, as *dhu* or *roy*; sometimes from size, as *beg* or *more*; at other times, from some particular exploit, or from some peculiarity of habit or appearance. The line of the text, therefore, signifies,

Black Roderick, the descendant of Alpine.

† The Lennox, as the district is called which encircles the lower extremity of Loch Lomond, was peculiarly exposed to the incursions of the mountaineers who inhabited the inaccessible fastnesses at the upper end of the lake, and the neighboring district of Loch Katrine. These were often marked by circumstances of great ferocity.

Widow and Saxon maid
 Long shall lament our raid,
 Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
 Lennox and Leven-glen
 Shake when they hear agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
 Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine!
 Oh! that the rose-bud that graces yon islands,
 Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
 Oh that some seedling gem,
 Worthy such noble stem,
 Honored and blessed in their shadow might grow
 Loud should Clan-Alpine then
 Ring from her deepest glen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XXI.

With all her joyful female band,
 Had Lady Margaret sought the strand.
 Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
 And high their snowy arms they threw,
 As echoing back with shrill acclaim
 And chorus wild the chieftain's name;
 While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
 The darling passion of his heart,
 The Dame called Ellen to the strand,
 To greet her kinsman ere he land;
 "Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
 And shun to wreathe a victor's brow?"
 Reluctantly and slow, the maid
 The unwelcome summoning obeyed,
 And, when a distant bugle rung,
 In the mid-path aside she sprung:
 "List, Allan-Bane! from mainland east,
 I hear my father's signal blast.
 Be ours," she cried, "the skiff to guide,
 And wait him from the mountain side."
 Then, like a sunbeam swift and bright,
 She darted to her shallop light.
 And, eagerly while Roderick scanned,
 For her dear form, his mother's band.

The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven ;
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head !
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely pressed,
Such holy drops her tresses steeped,
Though 'twas a hero's eye that weeped.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked she, that fear (affection's proof)
Still held a graceful youth aloof ;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII.

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Marked Roderick landing on the isle ;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the chieftain's pride,
Then dashed, with hasty hand, away
From his dimmed eye the gathering spray ;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said,
" Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
In my poor follower's glistening eye ?
I'll tell thee :—he recalls the day,
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answered loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
As mighty as yon chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.

Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
 Was I of all that marshalled crowd,
 Though the waned crescent owned my might,
 And in my train trooped lord and knight,
 Though Blantyre hymned her holiest lays,
 And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
 As when this old man's silent tear,
 And this poor maid's affection dear,
 A welcome give more kind and true
 Than aught my better fortunes knew.
 Forgive, my friend, a father's boast;
 Oh! it out-beggars all I lost!"

XXIV.

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
 That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
 The bashful maiden's cheek appeared—
 For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
 The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
 The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide:
 The loved caresses of the maid
 The dogs with crouch and whimper paid
 And, at her whistle, on her hand
 The falcon took his favorite stand,
 Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
 Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
 And trust, while in such guise she stood,
 Like fabled Goddess of the Wood,
 That if a father's partial thought
 O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
 Well might the lover's judgment fail,
 To balance with a juster scale;
 For with each secret glance he stole,
 The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV.

Of stature fair, and slender frame,
 But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
 The belted plaid and tartan hose
 Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
 His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
 Curled closely round his bonnet blue;
 Trained to the chase, his eagle eye

The ptarmigan in snow could spy ;
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith ;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe,
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outstripped in speed the mountaineer ;
Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind ;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame ;
It danced as lightsome in his breast,
As played the feather on his crest.
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold,
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, "Oh my sire!" did Ellen say,
"Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late returned? And why"—
The rest was in her speaking eye.
"My child, the chase I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war ;
And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I strayed
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade :
Nor strayed I safe ; for, all around,
Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risky life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
Guided my steps not unpursued ;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,

Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake,
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, nor in action, word, or eye,
Failed aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day;
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared,
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seemed toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made,
Ere he assembled round the flame,
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen too; then cast around
His eyes, then fixed them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
Then raised his haughty brow, and said:—

XXVIII.

"Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father—if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honored mother; Ellen—why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye?
And Græme; in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land,—
List all! The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,*

* In 1529, James V., determined to extirpate the Border robbers, who, during his minority, had committed many excesses, assembled a flying army of ten thousand men, consisting of his principal nobility and their followers.

Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To share their monarch's silvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared ;
And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side ;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless, and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes ; his end the same,
The same pretext of silvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
By fate of Border chivalry.*
Yet more ; amid Glenfinlas green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know ;
Your counsel in the streight I show."

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turned their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire, that to her son.
The hasty color went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme ;
But, from his glance it well appeared,

who were directed to bring their hawks and dogs with them, that the monarch might refresh himself with sport during the intervals of military execution. With this array he swept through Ettrick Forest, hanged over the gate of his own castle Piers Cockburn of Henderland, and caused Adam Scott of Tushielaw, who was distinguished by the title of King of the Border, and the noted John Armstrong of Gilnockie, to be executed. The effect of this severity was such, that, as the vulgar expressed it, "the rush bush kept the cow."

* James was, in fact, attentive to restrain rapine and feudal oppression not only upon the Border, but also in the Highlands and the Isles, many of the chief men of which he detained as hostages for the behavior of their vassals.

'Twas but for Ellen that he feared ;
 While sorrowful, but undismayed,
 The Douglas thus his counsel said :—
 “ Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
 It may but thunder and pass o'er ;
 Nor will I here remain an hour,
 To draw the lightning on thy bower ;
 For well thou know'st, at this gray head
 The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
 For thee, who, at thy King's command,
 Canst aid him with a gallant band,
 Submission, homage, humbled pride,
 Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
 Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
 Ellen and I will seek, apart,
 The refuge of some forest cell ;
 There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
 Till, on the mountain and the moor,
 The stern pursuit be passed and o'er.”

xxx.

“ No, by mine honor !” Roderick said,
 “ So help me heaven, and my good blade !
 No, never ! Blasted be yon Pine,
 My fathers' ancient crest and mine,
 If from its shade in danger part
 The lineage of the Bleeding Heart !
 Hear my blunt speech. Grant me this maid
 To wife, thy counsel to mine aid ;
 To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
 Will friends and allies flock enow ;
 Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
 Will bind to us each Western Chief.
 When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
 The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
 The guards shall start in Stirling's porch ;
 And, when I light the nuptial torch,
 A thousand villages in flames
 Shall scare the slumbers of King James.
 —Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
 And, mother, cease these sighs, I pray ;
 I meant not all my heat might say.
 Small need of inroad, or of fight,

When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foiled King, from pathless glen,
Shall bootless turn him home agen."

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean-tide's incessant roar,
Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till wakened by the morning beam ;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around,
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale ;—
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow ?—
Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawned around,
By crossing terrors wildly tossed,
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
Where death seemed combating with life ;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rushed the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
"Roderick, enough ! enough !" he cried,
"My daughter cannot be thy bride ;

Not that the blush to wooer dear,
 Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
 It may not be—forgive her, Chief,
 Nor hazard aught for our relief.
 Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
 Will level a rebellious spear.
 'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
 To rein a steed and wield a brand.
 I see him yet, the princely boy!
 Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
 I love him still, despite my wrongs,
 By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues.
 Oh seek the grace you well may find,
 Without a cause to mine combined."

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode;
 The waving of his tartans broad,
 And darkened brow, where wounded pride
 With ire and disappointment vied,
 Seemed, by the torch's gloomy light,
 Like the ill Demon of the night,
 Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
 Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:
 But, unrequited Love! thy dart
 Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
 And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
 At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
 While eyes, that mocked at tears before,
 With bitter drops were running o'er.
 The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
 Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
 But, struggling with his spirit proud,
 Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,
 While every sob—so mute were all—
 Was heard distinctly through the hall.
 The son's despair, the mother's look,
 Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
 She rose, and to her side there came,
 To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
 As flashes flame through sable smoke,

Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
 To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
 So the deep anguish of despair
 Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
 With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
 On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:—
 "Back, beardless boy!" he sternly said,
 "Back, minion! hold'st thou thus at naught
 The lesson I so lately taught?
 This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
 Thank thou for punishment delayed."
 Eager as greyhound on his game,
 Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
 "Perish my name, if aught afford
 Its chieftain safety, save his sword!"
 Thus as they strove, their desperate hand
 Griped to the dagger or the brand,
 And death had been—but Douglas rose,
 And thrust between the struggling foes
 His giant strength:—"Chieftains, forego!
 I hold the first who strikes, my foe.
 Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
 What! is the Douglas fallen so far,
 His daughter's hand is deemed the spoil
 Of such dishonorable broil!"
 Sullen and slowly, they unclasp,
 As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
 And each upon his rival glared,
 With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

XXXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
 Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
 And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
 As faltered through terrific dream.
 Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
 And veiled his wrath in scornful word.
 "Rest safe till morning; pity 'twere
 Such cheek should feel the midnight air!*"
 Then may'st thou to James Stuart tell,

* Hardihood was in every respect so essential to the character of a Highlander that the reproach of effeminacy was the most bitter which could be thrown upon him.

Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
 Nor lackey, with his free-born clan,
 The pageant pomp of earthly man.
 More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
 Thou canst our strength and passes show.
 Malise, what ho!"—his henchman* came;
 "Give our safe conduct to the Græme."
 Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold,
 "Fear nothing for thy favorite hold.
 The spot, an angel deigned to grace,
 Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place.
 Thy churlish courtesy for those
 Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
 As safe to me the mountain way
 At midnight, as in blaze of day,
 Though, with his boldest at his back,
 Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.
 Brave Douglas—lovely Ellen—nay,
 Naught here of parting will I say.
 Earth does not hold a lonesome glen,
 So secret, but we meet agen.
 Chieftain! we too shall find an hour."—
 He said, and left the silvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan followed to the strand,
 (Such was the Douglas's command,)
 And anxious told, how, on the morn,
 The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
 The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
 Dale, glen, and valley, down and moor.
 Much were the peril to the Græme,
 From those who to the signal came;
 Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
 Himself would row him to the strand.
 He gave his counsel to the wind,
 While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
 Round dirk and pouch and broadsword rolled,
 His ample plaid in tightened fold,

* This officer, who was a sort of secretary, was to be ready, upon all occasions, to venture his life in defence of his master. At drinking-bouts he stood behind his chieftain's seat, at his haunch, from whence his title was derived.

And stripped his limbs to such array
As best might suit the watery way.

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt:—"Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!"
The minstrel's hand he kindly pressed,
"Oh! could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade:
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
Who loves the Chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honored Douglas dwell,
Like hunted stag, in mountain cell:
Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air!—
Tell Roderick Dhu, I owe him naught,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain side:"
Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steered him from the shore;
And Allan strained his anxious eye,
Far 'mid the lake his form to spy.
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave,
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD.

The Gathering

I.

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
 Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
 And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
 Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
 How are they blotted from the things that be!
 How few, all weak and withered of their force,
 Wait, on the verge of dark eternity,
 Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
 To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless
 course.

Yet live there still who can remember well,
 How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
 Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
 And solitary heath, the signal knew;
 And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
 What time the warning note was keenly wound,
 What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
 While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering sound,
 And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.*

II.

The summer dawn's reflected hue
 To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;

* When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon an emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the *Fiery Cross*, and also the *Cross of Shame*, because disobedience to the symbol inferred infamy. It was passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbors, if the danger was common to them, and at sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear, suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced by the blood and burned marks upon this warlike signal.

Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled, but dimpled not, for joy ;
The mountain shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest ;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice reared of silver bright ;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn ;
The gray mist left the mountain side,
The torrent showed its glistening pride ;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry ;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush ;
In answer cooed the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught ;
For such Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast ;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV.

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
 Of juniper and rowan wild,
 Mingled with shivers from the oak,
 Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
 Brian the Hermit by it stood,
 Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
 His grisled beard and matted hair
 Obscured a visage of despair ;
 His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,
 The scars of frantic penance bore.
 That monk, of savage form and face,
 The impending danger of his race
 Had drawn from deepest solitude,
 Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
 Not his the mien of Christian priest,
 But Druid's, from the grave released.
 Whose hardened heart and eye might brook
 On human sacrifice to look.
 And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
 Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er ;
 The hallowed creed gave only worse
 And deadlier emphasis of curse.
 No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
 His cave the pilgrim shunned with care ;
 The eager huntsman knew his bound,
 And in mid chase called off his hound ;
 Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
 The desert-dweller met his path,
 He prayed, and signed the cross between,
 While terror took devotion's mien.

V.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.*
 His mother watched a midnight fold,
 Built deep within a dreary glen,
 Where scattered lay the bones of men,
 In some forgotten battle slain,
 And bleached by drifting wind and rain.

* The legend which follows is not of the author's invention, being adopted in almost every particular, from the geographical collections made by the Laird of Macfarlane.

It might have tamed a warrior's heart,
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fettered there the hand
Which once could burst an iron band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The field-fare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blind-worm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet flushed and full,
For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
All night, in this sad glen, the maid
Sate shrouded in her mantle's shade:
—She said, no shepherd sought her side,
No hunter's hand her snood untied,
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
The virgin snood did Alice wear:*
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short;
Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
Or holy Church or blessed rite,
But locked her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfessed.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
To wood and stream his hap to wail.

* The *snood*, or ribbon, with which a Scottish lass braided her hair, had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the *curch*, *toy*, or *coif*, when she passed, by marriage, into the matron state. But if the damsel was so unfortunate as to lose pretensions to the name of maiden, without gaining a right to that of matron, she was neither permitted to use the snood nor advanced to the graver dignity of the *curch*.

Till, frantic, he as truth received
 What of his birth the crowd believed,
 And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
 To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
 In vain to soothe his wayward fate,
 The cloister oped her pitying gate;
 In vain, the learning of the age
 Unclasped the sable-lettered page;
 Even in its treasures he could find
 Food for the fever of his mind.
 Eager he read whatever tells
 Of magic, cabala, and spells,
 And every dark pursuit allied
 To curious and presumptuous pride,
 Till, with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
 And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
 Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
 And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

The desert gave him visions wild,
 Such as might suit the Spectre's child.
 Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
 He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
 Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
 Beheld the river demon rise;
 The mountain mist took form and limb
 Of noontide hag, or goblin grim;
 The midnight wind came wild and dread,
 Swelled with the voices of the dead;
 Far on the future battle-heath
 His eye beheld the ranks of death:
 Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
 Shaped forth a disembodied world.
 One lingering sympathy of mind
 Still bound him to the mortal kind;
 The only parent he could claim
 Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
 Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
 The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;*

* Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelary or domestic spirit either of male or female appearance, who took an interest in

Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
 Of charging steeds, careering fast
 Along Benharrow's shingly side,
 Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride;*
 The thunderbolt had split the pine—
 All augur'd ill to Alpine's line.
 He girt his loins, and came to show
 The signals of impending woe,
 And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
 As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.

'Twas all prepared—and from the rock,
 A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
 Before the kindling pile was laid,
 And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
 Patient the sickening victim eyed
 The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
 Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb,
 Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
 The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
 A slender crosslet framed with care,
 A cubit's length in measure due;
 The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
 Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
 Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,†
 And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
 Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
 The Cross, thus formed, he held on high,
 With wasted hand and haggard eye,
 And strange and mingled feelings woke,
 While his anathema he spoke.

their prosperity, and intimated, by its wailings, any approaching disaster. The Ben-Shie implies the female Fairy, whose lamentations were often supposed to precede the death of a chieftain of particular families.

* A presage of this kind is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M'Lean of Lochbuy. The spirit of an ancestor slain in battle is heard to gallop along a stony bank, and then to ride thrice round the family residence, ringing his fairy bridle, and thus intimating the approaching calamity.

† *Inch-Cailliach*, the Isle of Nuns, or of Old Women, is a most beautiful island at the lower extremity of Loch Lomond. The burial-ground there continues to be used, and contains the family places of sepulture of several families, claiming a descent from the old Scottish King Alpine.

IX.

“Woe to the clansman, who shall view
 This symbol of sepulchral yew,
 Forgetful that its branches grew
 Where weep the heavens their holiest dew

On Alpine’s dwelling low!

Deserter of his Chieftain’s trust,
 He ne’er shall mingle with their dust,
 But from his sires and kindred thrust,
 Each clansman’s execration just

Shall doom him wrath and woe.”

He paused—the word the vassals took,
 With forward step and fiery look,
 On high their naked brands they shook,
 Their clattering targets wildly strook;

And first, in murmur low,

Then, like the billow in his course,
 That far to seaward finds his source,
 And flings to shore his mustered force,
 Burst, with loud roar, their answer hoarse,

“Woe to the traitor, woe!”

Ben-an’s gray scalp the accents knew,
 The joyous wolf from covert drew,
 The exulting eagle screamed afar—
 They knew the voice of Alpine’s war.

X.

The shout was hushed on lake and fell,
 The Monk resumed his muttered spell.
 Dismal and low its accents came,
 The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
 And the few words that reached the air
 Although the holiest name was there,
 Had more of blasphemy than prayer.

But when he shook above the crowd
 Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—
 “Woe to the wretch, who fails to rear,
 At this dread sign, the ready spear!

For, as the flames this symbol sear,
 His home, the refuge of his fear,

A kindred fate shall know;

Far o’er its roof the volumed flame
 Clan-Alpine’s vengeance shall proclaim,

While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
And infamy and woe!" -

Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
Of curses stammered slow ;

Answering, with imprecation dread,
"Sunk be his home in embers red!

And cursed be the meanest shed
That e'er shall hide the houseless head
We doom to want and woe!"

A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the gray pass where birches wave,
On Beala-nam-bo.

XI.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his laboring breath he drew,
While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread,
And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
Who, summoned to his Chieftain's aid,
The signal saw and disobeyed.
The crosslet's points of sparkling wood,
He quenched among the bubbling blood,
And as again the sign he reared,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard :
"When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes!
Wolves make the coward heart their prize!
As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth!
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark!
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside!"

He ceased : no echo gave agan
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took :
"Speed, Malise, speed!" he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave ;
"The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed!"
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew ;
High stood the henchman on the prow ;
So rapidly the bargemen row,
The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had neared the mainland hill ;
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathoms wide,
When lightly bounded to the land,
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed, Malise, speed ! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.*
Speed, Malise, speed ! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest ;
With short and springing footsteps pass
The trembling bog and false morass ;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound ;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap ;
Parched are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now ;

* The *brogue* or shoe of the Highlanders is made of half-dried leather with holes to admit and let out the water. The ancient buskin was still ruder, being made of the undressed deer's hide, with the hair outwards, a circumstance which procured the Highlanders the well-known epithet of *red shanks*.

Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursu'st not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace
With rivals in the mountain race;
But danger, death, and warrior deed
Are in thy course—Speed, Malise, speed!

XIV.

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They poured each hardy tenant down.
Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;
He showed the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamor and surprise behind.
The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
With changed cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swathe his scythe;
The herds without a keeper strayed,
The plough was in mid-furrow staid,
The falc'ner tossed his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rushed to arms;
So swept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,
The lark's blithe carol from the cloud,
Seems for the scene too gayly loud.

XV.

Speed, Malise, speed! the lake is past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen,
Half hidden in the copse so green;
There mayst thou rest, thy labor done,

Their Lord shall speed the signal on.
 As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
 The henchman shot him down the way.
 —What woeful accents load the gale?
 The funeral yell, the female wail!
 A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
 A valiant warrior fights no more.
 Who, in the battle or the chase,
 At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
 Within the hall, where torch's ray
 Supplies the excluded beams of day,
 Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
 And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
 His stripling son stands mournful by,
 His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
 The village maids and matrons round,
 The dismal coronach* resound.

XVI.

CORONACH.

He is gone on the mountain,
 He is lost to the forest,
 Like a summer-dried fountain,
 When our need was the sorest.
 The font, reappearing,
 From the rain-drops shall borrow,
 But to us comes no cheering,
 To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weeper
 Wails manhood in glory;
 The autumn winds rushing,
 Waft the leaves that are searest,
 But our flower was in flushing,
 When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,†
 Sage counsel in cumber,

* The *Coronach* of the Highlanders, was a wild expression of lamentation, poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend.

† Or *corri*. The hollow side of the hill, where game usually flies.

Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever!

XVII.

See Stumah,* who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed—
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste, or deadly fear,
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast:—unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall!
Before the dead man's bier he stood,
Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood!
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!"

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprang forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu.
"Alas!" she sobbed—"and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!"
One look he cast upon the bier,
Dashed from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep, to clear his laboring breast,
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt, when, freed,

* *Faithful*. The name of a dog.

First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanished, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footsteps she could hear ;
And when she marked the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
"Kinsman," she said, "his race is run,
That should have sped thine errand on ;
The oak has fallen—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son.
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head !
Let babes and women wail the dead."
Then weapon-clan, and martial call,
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched sword and targe, with hurried hand ;
And short and fitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrowed force ;
Grief claimed his right, and tears their course.

XIX.

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew ;
The tear that gathered in his eye,
He left the mountain breeze to dry ;
Until, where Teith's young waters roll,
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
That graced the sable strath with green,
The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
But Angus paused not on the edge ;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reeled his sympathetic eye,

He dashed amid the torrent's roar ;
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide
And stay his footing in the tide.
He stumbled twice—the foam splashed high,
With hoarser swell the stream raced by ;
And had he fallen—forever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir !
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife,
Until the opposing bank he gained,
And up the chapel pathway strained.

XX.

A blithesome rout, that morning tide,
Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
To Norman, heir of Armandave,
And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude, but glad procession, came
Boneted sire, and coif-clad dame ;
And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
Which snooded maiden would not hear ;
And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry ;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step, and bashful hand,
She held the kerchief's snowy band ;
The gallant bridegroom, by her side,
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the church-yard gate
The messenger of fear and fate !
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,

Panting and travel-soiled he stood,
 The fatal sign of fire and sword
 Held forth, and spoke the appointed word :
 "The muster-place is Lanrick mead ;
 Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!"
 And must he change so soon the hand,
 Just linked to his by holy band,
 For the fell cross of blood and brand?
 And must the day, so blithe that rose,
 And promised rapture in the close,
 Before its setting hour divide
 The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
 O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
 Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust.
 Her summons dread, brooks no delay ;
 Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
 And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
 Until he saw the starting tear
 Speak woe he might not stop to cheer ;
 Then, trusting not a second look,
 In haste he sped him up the brook,
 Nor backward glanced, till on the heath
 Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.
 —What in the racer's bosom stirred?
 The sickening pang of hope deferred ;
 And memory, with a torturing train
 Of all his morning visions vain.
 Mingled with love's impatience, came
 The manly thirst for martial fame ;
 The stormy joy of mountaineers,
 Ere yet they rush upon the spears ;
 And zeal for clan and chieftain burning,
 And hope, from well-fought field returning,
 With war's red honors on his crest,
 To clasp his Mary to his breast.
 Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
 Like fire from flint he glanced away,
 While high resolve, and feeling strong,
 Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.

SONG.

The heath this night must be my bed,
The bracken* curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far from love and thee, Mary ;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper-song, thy wail, sweet maid !
It will not waken me, Mary !

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know ;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary !

A time will come with feeling fraught ;
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary !
And if returned from conquered foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose
To my young bride and me, Mary !

XXIV.

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze, †
Rushing in conflagration strong,
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below ;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,

* *Bracken*—Fern.

† The heath on the Scottish moorlands is often set on fire, that the sheep may have the advantage of the young herbage produced in room of the tough old heather plants. This custom produces occasionally the most beautiful nocturnal appearance, similar almost to the discharge of a volcano.

As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
 The signal roused to martial coil
 The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
 Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
 Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy course :
 Thence southward turned its rapid road
 Adown Strath Gartney's valley broad,
 Till rose in arms each man might claim
 A portion in Clan-Alpine's name ;
 From the gray sire, whose trembling hand
 Could hardly buckle on his brand,
 To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
 Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
 Each valley, each sequestered glen,
 Mustered its little horde of men,
 That met as torrents from the height
 In Highland dale their streams unite,
 Still gathering, as they pour along,
 A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
 Till at the rendezvous they stood
 By hundreds prompt for blows and blood ;
 Each trained to arms since life began,
 Owing no tie but to his clan,
 No oath, but by his Chieftain's hand,*
 No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

XXV.

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
 Surveyed the skirts of Benvenue,
 And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
 To view the frontiers of Menteith.
 All backward came with news of truce ;
 Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
 In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
 No banner waved on Cardross gate,
 On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
 Nor scared the herons from Loch Con ;
 All seemed at peace. Now, wot ye why
 The Chieftain, with such anxious eye,
 Ere to the muster he repair,

* The deep and implicit respect paid by the Highland clansmen to their chief, rendered this both a common and a solemn oath.

This western frontier scanned with care?—
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
A fair, though cruel pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,
And in a deep sequestered dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard, in Celtic tongue,
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin* been sung;
A softer name the Saxon gave,
And called the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast:
Its trench had stayed full many a rock,
Hurled by primeval earthquake shock
From Benvenue's gray summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
And formed the rugged silvan grot.
The oak and birch, with mingled shade,
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,
With dashing hollow voice, that spoke
The incessant war of wave and rock.

* This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountain of Benvenue, overhanging the southeastern extremity of Loch Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, and overshadowed with birch trees, mingled with oaks, the spontaneous production of the mountain, even where its cliffs appear denuded of soil. The name signifies, the den of the shaggy men, and tradition has ascribed to the *urisk*, who gives name to the cavern, a figure between a goat and a man: in short, precisely that of the Grecian satyr.

Suspended cliffs, with hideous sway,
 Seemed nodding o'er the cavern gray.
 From such a den the wolf had sprung,
 In such the wild-cat leaves her young;
 Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
 Sought, for a space, their safety there.
 Gray Superstition's whisper dread
 Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;
 For there, she said, did fays resort,
 And satyrs hold their silvan court,
 By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
 And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
 Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
 When Roderick, with a chosen few,
 Repassed the heights of Benvenue.
 Above the Goblin-cave they go,
 Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo;*
 The prompt retainers speed before,
 To launch the shallop from the shore,
 For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
 To view the passes of Achray,
 And place his clansmen in array.
 Yet lags the Chief in musing mind,
 Unwonted sight, his men behind:
 A single page, to bear his sword,
 Alone attended on his lord;
 The rest their way through thickets break,
 And soon await him by the lake.
 It was a fair and gallant sight,
 To view them from the neighboring height,
 By the low-levelled sunbeam's light;
 For strength and statue, from the clan
 Each warrior was a chosen man,
 As even afar might well be seen,
 By their proud step and martial mien.
 Their feathers dance, their tartans float,

* Bealach-nam-Bo, or the pass of cattle, is a most magnificent glade, overhung with aged birch-trees, a little higher up the mountain than the Coir-ean-Uriskin.

Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand,
That well became such mountain strand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turned apart the road
To Douglas's obscure abode.
It was but with that dawning morn,
That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn
To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
But he who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove—
By firm resolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
Still hovering near his treasure lost;
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,
Still fondly strains his anxious ear
The accents of her voice to hear,
And inly did he curse the breeze
That waked to sound the rustling trees.
But, hark! what mingles in the strain?
It is the harp of Allan-Bane,
That wakes its measures slow and high,
Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
What melting voice attends the strings?
'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings!

XXIX.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

Ave Maria! maiden mild!
Listen to a maiden's prayer!
Thou canst hear though from the wild,
Thou canst save amidst despair.
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banished, outcast, and reviled—
Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer!
Mother, hear a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share,
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.

The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer!
Mother, list a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! Stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.

We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer!
And for a father hear a child!

Ave Maria!

XXX.

Died on the harp the closing hymn—
Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord
Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
Until the page, with humble sign,
Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
Then while his plaid he round him cast,
"It is the last time—'tis the last"—
He muttered thrice—"the last time e'er
That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!"
It was a goading thought—his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain side;
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,
And eastward held their hasty way,
Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where mustered, in the vale below,
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI.

A various scene the clansmen made,
Some sate, some stood, some slowly strayed;

But most, with mantles folded round,
 Were couched to rest upon the ground
 Scarce to be known by curious eye,
 From the deep heather where they lie,
 So well was matched the tartan screen
 With heath-bell dark and brackens green ;
 Unless where, here and there, a blade,
 Or lance's point, a glimmer made,
 Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
 But, when, advancing through the gloom,
 They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
 Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
 Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
 Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
 Three times returned the martial yell.
 It died upon Bochastle's plain,
 And Silence claimed her evening reign.

CANTO FOURTH.

The Prophecy.

I.

“THE rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
 And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears ;
 The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
 And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
 O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
 I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
 Emblem of hope and love through future years !”
 Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
 What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II.

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
 Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
 All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,
 His axe and bow beside him lay

For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
 A wakeful sentinel he stood.
 Hark!—on the rock a footstep rung,
 And instant to his arms he sprung.
 “Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?—soon
 Art thou returned from Braes of Doune.
 By thy keen step and glance I know,
 Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe.”
 (For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
 On distant scout had Malise gone.)
 “Where sleeps the Chief?” the henchman said.
 “Apart, in yonder misty glade;
 To his lone couch I'll be your guide.”
 Then called a slumberer by his side,
 And stirred him with his slackened bow—
 “Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
 We seek the Chieftain; on the track,
 Keep eagle watch till I come back.”

III.

Together up the pass they sped:
 “What of the foeman?” Norman said.
 “Varying reports from near and far;
 This certain—that a band of war
 Has for two days been ready boune,
 At prompt command to march from Doune;
 King James, the while, with princely powers,
 Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
 Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
 Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
 Inured to bide such bitter bout,
 The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
 But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
 A shelter for thy bonny bride?”
 “What! know ye not that Roderick's care
 To the lone isle hath caused repair
 Each maid and matron of the clan,
 And every child and aged man
 Unfit for arms? and given his charge,
 Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
 Upon these lakes shall float at large,
 But all beside the islet moor,
 That such dear pledge may rest secure?”

IV.

" 'Tis well advised—the Chieftain's plan
 Bespeaks the father of his clan.
 But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
 Apart from all his followers true?"
 " It is, because last evening-tide
 Brian an augury hath tried,
 Of that dread kind which must not be
 Unless in dread extremity,
 The Taghairm* called; by which, afar,
 Our sires foresaw the events of war.
 Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew—"

MALISE.

" Ah! well the gallant brute I knew,
 The choicest of the prey we had,
 When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
 His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
 His red eye glowed like fiery spark;
 So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
 Sore did he cumber our retreat,
 And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
 Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
 But steep and flinty was the road,
 And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
 And when we came to Dennan's Row,
 A child might scatheless stroke his brow."

V.

NORMAN.

" That bull was slain; his reeking hide
 They stretched the cataract beside,
 Whose waters their wild tumult toss
 Adown the black and craggy boss
 Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
 Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.†

* One of the most noted of the Highland modes of divination was the *Taghairm*. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly slain bullock, and deposited beside a water-fall, or in some other wild and unusual situation, where he revolved in his mind the question proposed, and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits which haunt these desolate recesses.

† There is a rock so named in the forest of Glenfinlas, by which a tumultuary cataract takes its course.

Couched on a shelve beneath its brink,
 Close where the thundering torrents sink,
 Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
 And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
 'Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,
 The wizard waits prophetic dream.
 Nor distant rests the Chief:—but hush!
 See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
 The Hermit gains yon rock, and stands
 To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
 Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
 That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?
 Or raven on the blasted oak,
 That, watching while the deer is broke,
 His morsel claims with sullen croak?*"

MALISE.

“Peace! peace! to other than to me,
 Thy words were evil augury;
 But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
 Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
 Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell,
 Yon fiend-begotten monk can tell.
 The Chieftain joins him, see—and now,
 Together they descend the brow.”

VI.

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
 The Hermit Monk held solemn word:
 “Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
 For man endowed with mortal life,
 Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
 Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
 Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
 Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance—
 'Tis hard for such to view, unfurled,

* In cutting up, or, as it was technically called, *breaking* the slaughtered stag, the forester had his allotted portion; the hounds had a certain allowance; and, to make the division as general as possible, the very birds had their share also. “There is a little gristle,” says Tuberville, “which is upon the spoone of the brisket, which we call the raven's bone; and I have seen in some places a raven so wont and accustomed to it, that she would never fail to croak and cry for it all the time you were in breaking up of the deer, and would not depart till she had it.”

The curtain of the future world.
 Yet witness every quaking limb,
 My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,
 My soul with harrowing anguish torn,
 This for my Chieftain have I borne!
 The shapes that sought my fearful couch,
 A human tongue may ne'er avouch.
 No mortal man save he, who, bred
 Between the living and the dead,
 Is gifted beyond nature's law,
 Had e'er survived to say he saw.
 At length the fateful answer came,
 In characters of living flame!
 Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
 But borne and branded on my soul;—
 WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
 THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE.”*

VII.

“Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
 Good is thine augury, and fair.
 Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
 But first our broadswords tasted blood.
 A surer victim still I know,
 Self-offered to the auspicious blow:
 A spy hath sought my land this morn,
 No eve shall witness his return!
 My followers guard each pass's mouth,
 To east, to westward, and to south;
 Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
 Has charge to lead his steps aside,
 Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
 He light on those shall bring him down.
 But see, who comes his news to show!
 Malise! what tidings of the foe?”

VIII.

“At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive,
 Two Barons proud their banners wave.

* This was an augury frequently attended to. It is said that the Highlanders under Montrose were so deeply imbued with the notion, that, on the morning of the battle of Tippermoor, they murdered a defenceless herdsman, merely to secure this advantage.

I saw the Moray's silver star,
 And marked the sable pale of Mar."
 "By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
 I love to hear of worthy foes.
 When move they on!" "To-morrow's noon
 Will see them here for battle boune."
 "Then shall it see a meeting stern!—
 But, for the place—say, couldst thou learn
 Naught of the friendly clans of Earn?
 Strengthened by them, we well might bide
 The battle on Benledi's side.
 Thou couldst not?—well! Clan-Alpine's men
 Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
 Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
 All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
 Each for his hearth and household fire,
 Father for child, and son for sire—
 Lover for maid beloved!—but why—
 Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
 Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!
 A messenger of doubt or fear?
 No! sooner may the Saxon lance
 Unfix Benledi from his stance,
 Than doubt and terror can pierce through
 The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu;
 'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.
 Each to his post!—all know their charge."
 The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
 The broadswords gleam, the banners dance,
 Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.
 —I turn me from the martial roar,
 And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas?—he is gone;
 And Ellen sits on the gray stone
 Fast by the cave, and makes her moan;
 While vainly Allan's words of cheer
 Are poured on her unheeding ear.
 "He will return—dear lady, trust!—
 With joy return; he will—he must!
 Well was it time to seek, afar,
 Some refuge from impending war,

When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
 Are cowed by the approaching storm.
 I saw their boats, with many a light,
 Floating the livelong yesternight,
 Shifting like flashes darted forth
 By the red streamers of the north;
 I marked at morn how close they ride,
 Thick moored by the lone islet's side,
 Like wild ducks couching in the fen,
 When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
 Since this rude race dare not abide
 The peril on the mainland side,
 Shall not thy noble father's care
 Some safe retreat for thee prepare?"

X.

"No! Allan, no! Pretext so kind
 My wakeful terrors could not blind.
 When in such tender tone, yet grave,
 Douglas a parting blessing gave,
 The tear that glistened in his eye
 Drowned not his purpose, fixed and high.
 My soul, though feminine and weak,
 Can image his; e'en as the lake,
 Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
 Reflects the invulnerable rock.
 He hears report of battle rife,
 He deems himself the cause of strife.
 I saw him redden, when the theme
 Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream,
 Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
 Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
 Think'st thou he trowed thine omen aught?
 Oh no! 'twas apprehensive thought
 For the kind youth—for Roderick, too—
 (Let me be just) that friend so true;
 In danger both, and in our cause!
 Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
 Why else that solemn warning given,
 'If not on earth, we meet in heaven!'
 Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
 If e'er return him not again,
 Am I to hie and make me known?"

Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
 Buys his friends' safety with his own;
 He goes to do—what I had done,
 Had Douglas' daughter been his son!"

XI.

"Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
 If aught should his return delay,
 He only named yon holy fane
 As fitting place to meet again.
 Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme,
 Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!
 My visioned sight may yet prove true,
 Nor bode of ill to him or you.
 When did my gifted dream beguile?
 Think of the stranger at the isle,
 And think upon the harpings slow,
 That presaged this approaching woe!
 Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.
 Would we had left this dismal spot!
 Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot,
 Of such a wondrous tale I know—
 Dear lady, change that look of woe!
 My heart was wont thy grief to cheer."—

ELLEN.

"Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
 But cannot stop the bursting tear."
 The Minstrel tried his simple art,
 But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII.

BALLAD.

ALICE BRAND.*

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
 When the mavis† and merle‡ are singing,
 When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
 And the hunter's horn is ringing.

* This little fairy tale is founded upon a very curious Danish ballad, which occurs in the KIEMPE VISER, a collection of heroic songs, first published in 1591, and reprinted in 1695.

† Thrush.

‡ Blackbird.

“O Alice Brand! my native land
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

“O Alice! ’twas all for thy locks so bright,
And ’twas all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless flight,
Thy brother bold I slew.

“Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

“And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer,
To keep the cold away.”

“O Richard! if my brother died,
’Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried
And Fortune sped the lance.

“If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we’ll say, is the russet gray,
As gay the forest-green.

“And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.”

XIII.

BALLAD—*continued.*

’Tis merry, ’tis merry, in good greenwood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech’s pride, and the oak’s brown side,
Lord Richard’s axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who won’d within the hill—*

* The *Daoine Shi*, or men of peace of the Highlanders, are believed to inhabit certain round grassy eminences, where they celebrate their nocturnal

Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

“Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle’s screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairy’s fatal green?*

“Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christened man; †
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For muttered word or ban.

“Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and prey that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die.”

XIV.

BALLAD—continued.

’Tis merry, ’tis merry, in good greenwood,
Though the birds have stilled their singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf
Before Lord Richard stands,
And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
“I fear not sign,” quoth the grisly elf,
“That is made with bloody hands.”

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear—

festivities by the light of the moon. Many, it is said, of mortal race have been entertained in their secret recesses; but unhappy is the mortal who joins in their joys, or ventures to partake of their dainties. By this indulgence, he forfeits forever the society of men, and is bound down irrevocably to the condition of a Shi’ich, or man of peace.

* As the *Daoine Shi’*, or men of peace, wore green habits, they were supposed to take offence when any mortals ventured to assume their favorite color.

† The elves were supposed greatly to envy the privileges acquired by Christian initiation, and they gave to those mortals who had fallen into their power, a certain precedence, founded upon this advantageous distinction.

“And if there’s blood upon his hand,
’Tis but the blood of deer.”

“Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood !
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand.”

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign—
“And if there’s blood on Richard’s hand,
A spotless hand is mine.

“And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
By Him whom Demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here ?”

XV.

BALLAD—*continued.*

“’Tis merry, ’tis merry, in Fairy-land,
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch’s side,
With bit and bridle ringing :

“And gayly shines the Fairy-land,—
But all is glistening show,
Like the idle gleam that December’s beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

“And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seen,
And now like dwarf and ape.

“It was between the night and day
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sank down in a sinful fray,
And, ’twixt life and death, was snatched away
To the joyless Elfin bower.*

“But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,

* The subjects of Fairy-land were recruited from the regions of humanity, so that many of those who were in this world supposed to have discharged the debt of nature, had only become denizens of the “Londe of Faery.”

I might regain my mortal mold,
As fair a form as thine."

She crossed him once—she crossed him twice—
That lady was so brave ;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold :
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mold,
Her brother Ethert Brand !

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline gray,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were staid,
A stranger climbed the steepy glade ;
His martial step, his stately mien,
His hunting suit of Lincoln-green,
His eagle glance remembrance claims—
'Tis Snowdown's Knight—'tis James Fitz-James.
Ellen beheld as in a dream,
Then, starting, scarce suppressed a scream :
"O stranger ! in such hour of fear,
What evil hap has brought thee here ?"
"An evil hap how can it be,
That bids me look again on thee ?
By promise bound, my former guide
Met me betimes this morning tide,
And marshalled, over bank and bourne,
The happy path of my return."
"The happy path!—what ! said he naught
Of war, of battle to be fought,
Of guarded pass?"—"No, by my faith !
Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."
"O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,
—Yonder his tartans I discern ;
Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
That he will guide the stranger sure!—

What prompted thee, unhappy man?
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
 Had not been bribed by love or fear,
 Unknown to him, to guide thee here."

XVII.

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
 Since it is worthy care from thee;
 Yet life I hold but idle breath,
 When love or honor's weighed with death.
 Then let me profit by my chance,
 And speak my purpose bold at once.
 I come to bear thee from a wild,
 Where ne'er before such blossom smiled;
 By this soft hand to lead thee far
 From frantic scenes of feud and war.
 Near Bochastle my horses wait;
 They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
 I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
 I'll guard thee like a tender flower—"
 "Oh! hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art,
 To say I do not read thy heart;
 Too much, before, my selfish ear
 Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
 That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
 In deathful hour o'er dangerous track;
 And how, oh how, can I atone
 The wreck my vanity brought on!
 One way remains—I'll tell him all—
 Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
 Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
 Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
 But first—my father is a man
 Outlawed and exiled, under ban;
 The price of blood is on his head,
 With me 'twere infamy to wed.—
 Still wouldst thou speak?—then hear the truth!
 Fitz-James, there is a noble youth,—
 If yet he is! exposed, for me
 And mine, to dread extremity—
 Thou hast the secret of my heart;
 Forgive, be generous, and depart!"

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
 A lady's fickle heart to gain;
 But here he knew and felt them vain.
 There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
 To give her steadfast speech the lie;
 In maiden confidence she stood,
 Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
 And told her love with such a sigh
 Of deep and hopeless agony,
 As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom,
 And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
 Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
 But not with hope fled sympathy.
 He proffered to attend her side,
 As brother would a sister guide.
 "Oh! little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
 Safer for both we go apart.
 Oh haste thee, and from Allan learn,
 If thou mayst trust yon wily kern."
 With hand upon his forehead laid,
 The conflict of his mind to shade,
 A parting step or two he made;
 Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
 He paused, and turned, and came again.

XIX.

"Hear, lady, yet, a parting word!—
 It chanced in fight that my poor sword
 Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
 This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
 And bade, when I had boon to crave,
 To bring it back, and boldly claim
 The recompense that I would name.
 Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
 But one who lives by lance and sword,
 Whose castle is his helm and shield,
 His lordship, the embattled field.
 What from a prince can I demand,
 Who neither reck of state nor land?
 Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
 Each guard and usher knows the sign.
 Seek thou the king without delay;

This signet shall secure thy way;
And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me."
He placed the golden circlet on,
Paused—kissed her hand—and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He joined his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way,
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Trosach's glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whooped loud and high—
"Murdoch! was that a signal cry?"
He stammered forth—"I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare."
He looked—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed:—"Ah! gallant gray!
For thee—for me, perchance—'twere well
We ne'er had seen the Trosach's dell.
Murdoch, move first—but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!"
Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,
When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tattered weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seemed naught to mark, yet all to spy.
Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom;
With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;
Such spoils her desperate step had sought,

Where scarce was footing for the goat.
 The tartan plaid she first descried,
 And shrieked, till all the rocks replied;
 As loud she laughed when near they drew,
 For then the Lowland garb she knew;
 And then her hands she wildly rung,
 And then she wept, and then she sung—
 She sung!—the voice, in better time,
 Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
 And now, though strained and roughened, still
 Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII.

SONG.

“They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
 They say my brain is warped and wrung—
 I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
 I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
 But were I now where Allan glides,
 Or heard my native Devan’s tides,
 So sweetly would I rest and pray
 That heaven would close my wintry day!

“’Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
 They bade me to the church repair;
 It was my bridal morn, they said,
 And my true love would meet me there.
 But woe betide the cruel guile
 That drowned in blood the morning smile!
 And woe betide the fairy dream!
 I only waked to sob and scream.”

XXIII.

“Who is this maid? what means her lay?
 She hovers o’er the hollow way,
 And flutters wide her mantle gray,
 As the lone heron spreads his wing,
 By twilight, o’er a haunted spring.”
 “’Tis Blanche of Devan,” Murdoch said,
 “A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
 Ta’en on the morn she was a bride,
 When Roderick forayed Devan-side.
 The gay bridegroom resistance made,

And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
 I marvel she is now at large,
 But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge :—
 Hence, brain-sick fool!" He raised his bow :—
 "Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
 I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
 As ever peasant pitched a bar!"
 "Thanks, champion, thanks!" the Maniac cried,
 And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.
 "See the gray pennons I prepare,
 To seek my true love through the air!
 I will not lend that savage groom,
 To break his fall, one downy plume!
 No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
 The wolves shall batten on his bones,
 And then shall his detested plaid,
 By bush and brier in mid-air staid,
 Wave forth a banner fair and free,
 Meet signal for their revelry."—

XXIV.

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!"—
 "Oh! thou look'st kindly, and I will.
 Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
 But still it loves the Lincoln-green;
 And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
 Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

For oh my sweet William was forester true,
 He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
 His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
 And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay! . . .

It was not that I meant to tell . . .
 But thou art wise, and guessest well."
 Then, in a low and broken tone,
 And hurried note, the song went on.
 Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
 She fixed her apprehensive eye;
 Then turned it on the Knight, and then
 Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV.

“The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set,
 Ever sing merrily, merrily;
 The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
 Hunters live so cheerily.

“It was a stag, a stag of ten,*
 Bearing his branches sturdily;
 He came stately down the glen,
 Ever sing hardily, hardily.

“It was there he met with a wounded doe,
 She was bleeding deathfully;
 She warned him of the toils below,
 Oh so faithfully, faithfully!

“He had an eye, and he could heed,
 Ever sing warily, warily;
 He had a foot, and he could speed—
 Hunters watch so narrowly.”

XXVI.

Fitz-James's mind was passion-tossed,
 When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
 But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
 And Blanche's song conviction brought.—
 Not like a stag that spies the snare,
 But lion of the hunt aware,
 He waved at once his blade on high,
 “Disclose thy treachery, or die!”
 Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
 But in his race his bow he drew:
 The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
 And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast.
 Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
 For ne'er had Alpine's son such need!
 With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
 The fierce avenger is behind!
 Fate judges of the rapid strife—
 The forfeit, death—the prize is life!
 Thy kindred ambush lies before,
 Close couched upon the heathery moor:

* Having ten branches on his antlers.

Them couldst thou reach!—it may not be—
Thine ambushed kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!
—Resistless speeds the deathly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust;
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain,
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die;
Then slower wended back his way
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sate beneath the birchen-tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed.
Her wreath of broom and feathers gray,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried,—
“Stranger, it is in vain!” she cried.
“This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye,
That thou wert mine avenger born.
Seest thou this tress?—Oh! still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair.
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimmed its shine.
I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head—
My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.—
I waver still.—O God! more bright
Let reason beam her parting light!—
Oh! by thy knighthood's honored sign,
And for thy life preserved by mine,

When thou shalt see a darksome man,
 Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
 With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
 And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
 Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
 And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!—
 They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
 Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell."

XXVIII.

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
 Fast poured his eyes at pity's claims,
 And now, with mingled grief and ire,
 He saw the murdered maid expire.
 "God, in my need, be my relief,
 As I wreak this on yonder Chief!"—
 A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
 He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
 The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
 And placed it on his bonnet side:
 "By Him whose word is truth! I swear,
 No other favor will I wear,
 Till this sad token I imbrue
 In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
 But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
 The chase is up—but they shall know,
 The stag at bay's a dangerous foe."
 Barred from the known but guarded way,
 Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
 And oft must change his desperate track,
 By stream and precipice turned back.
 Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
 From lack of food and loss of strength,
 He couched him in a thicket hoar,
 And thought his toils and perils o'er:—
 "Of all my rash adventures past,
 This frantic feat will prove the last!
 Who e'er so mad but might have guessed,
 That all this Highland hornet's nest
 Would muster up in swarms so soon
 As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?
 Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
 Hark to the whistle and the shout!

If farther through the wilds I go,
 I only fall upon the foe;
 I'll couch me here till evening gray,
 Then darkling try my dangerous way."

XXIX.

The shades of eve come slowly down,
 The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
 The owl awakens from her dell,
 The fox is heard upon the fell;
 Enough remains of glimmering light
 To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
 Yet not enough from far to show
 His figure to the watchful foe.
 With cautious step, and ear awake,
 He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
 And not the summer solstice, there,
 Tempered the midnight mountain air,
 But every breeze that swept the wold,
 Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.
 In dread, in danger, and alone,
 Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,
 Tangled and steep, he journeyed on;
 Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
 A watch-fire close before him burned.

XXX.

Beside its embers red and clear,
 Basked, in his plaid, a mountaineer;
 And up he sprung with sword in hand, —
 "Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!"
 "A stranger."—"What dost thou require?"
 "Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
 My life's beset, my path is lost,
 The gale has chilled my limbs with frost."
 "Art thou a friend to Roderick?"—"No."—
 "Thou darest not call thyself a foe?"—
 "I dare! to him and all the band
 He brings to aid his murderous hand."
 "Bold words!—but, though the beast of game
 The privilege of chase may claim,
 Though space and law the stag we lend,
 Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend,

Who ever recked, where, how, or when,
 The prowling fox was trapped or slain?*

Thus, treacherous scouts—yet sure they lie,
 Who say thou camest a secret spy!”

“They do, by heaven! Come Roderick Dhu,
 And of his clan the boldest two,
 And let me but till morning rest,
 I write the falsehood on their crest.”

“If by the blaze I mark aright,
 Thou bear’st the belt and spur of Knight.”

“Then, by these tokens mayst thou know,
 Each proud oppressor’s mortal foe.”

“Enough, enough; sit down and share
 A soldier’s couch, a soldier’s fare.”

XXXI.

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
 The hardened flesh of mountain deer; †
 Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
 And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
 He tendered him like welcome guest,
 Then thus his further speech addressed:
 “Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
 A clansman born, a kinsman true;
 Each word against his honor spoke,
 Demands of me avenging stroke;
 Yet more—upon thy fate, ’tis said,
 A mighty augury is laid.
 It rests with me to wind my horn,
 Thou art with numbers overborne;
 It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
 Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
 But nor for clan nor kindred’s cause,
 Will I depart from honor’s laws:

* Saint John actually used this illustration when engaged in confuting the plea of law proposed for the unfortunate Earl of Strafford:—“It was true, we give laws to hares and deer, because they are beasts of chase; but it was never accouted either cruelty or foul play to knock foxes or wolves on the head as they can be found, because they are beasts of prey.”

† The Scottish Highlanders, in former times, devoured their venison raw, without any further preparation than compressing it between two batons of rood, so as to force out the blood, and render it extremely hard. This they reckoned a great delicacy.

To assail a wearied man were shame,
A stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
As far as Coilantogle's ford;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword."
"I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as 'tis nobly given!"—
"Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
With that he shook the gathered heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Combat.

I.

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain-side,
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow
of War.

II.

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
 Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
 When, rousing at its glimmer red,
 The warriors left their lowly bed,
 Looked out upon the dappled sky,
 Muttered their soldier matins by,
 And then awaked their fire, to steal,
 As short and rude, their soldier meal.
 That o'er, the Gael* around him threw
 His graceful plaid of varied hue,
 And, true to promise, led the way,
 By thicket green and mountain gray.
 A wildering path!—they winded now
 Along the precipice's brow,
 Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
 The windings of the Forth and Teith,
 And all the vales between that lie,
 Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
 Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
 Gained not the length of horseman's lance.
 'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
 Assistance from the hand to gain;
 So tangled oft, that, bursting through,
 Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
 That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
 It rivals all but Beauty's tear.

III.

At length they came where, stern and steep,
 The hill sinks down upon the deep.
 Here Vennachar in silver flows,
 There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
 Ever the hollow path twined on,
 Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
 A hundred men might hold the post
 With hardihood against a host.
 The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
 Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,

* The Scottish Highlander calls himself *Gael*, or *Gaul*, and terms the Lowlanders *Sassenach*, or Saxons.

With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still,
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill ;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrent down had borne,
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James by what strange cause
He sought these wilds, traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV.

“ Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt, and by my side ;
Yet, sooth to tell,” the Saxon said,
“ I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill ;
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain guide,
Though deep, perchance, the villain lied :
“ Yet why a second venture try ?”
“ A warrior thou, and ask me why !
Moves our free course by such fixed cause,
As gives the poor mechanic laws ?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day ;
Slight cause will then suffice to guide
A knight's free footsteps far and wide,—
A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
The merry glance of mountain maid :
Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger's self is lure alone.”

V.

“Thy secret keep, I urge thee not ;—
 Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
 Say, heard ye naught of Lowland war,
 Against Clan-Alpine raised by Mar?”
 “No, by my word ;—of bands prepared
 To guard King James’s sports I heard ;
 Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
 This muster of the mountaineer,
 Their pennons will abroad be flung,
 Which else in Doune had peaceful hung.”
 “Free be they flung !—for we were loth
 Their silken folds should feast the moth.
 Free be they flung !—as free shall wave
 Clan-Alpine’s pine in banner brave.
 But, Stranger, peaceful since you came,
 Bewildered in the mountain game,
 Whence the bold boast by which you show
 Vich-Alpine’s vowed and mortal foe?”—
 “Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
 Naught of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Save as an outlawed, desperate man,
 The chief of a rebellious clan,
 Who, in the Regent’s court and sight,
 With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight :
 Yet this alone might from his part
 Sever each true and loyal heart.”

VI.

Wrothful at such arraignment foul,
 Dark lowered the clansman’s sable scowl.
 A space he paused, then sternly said—
 “And heard’st thou why he drew his blade ?
 Heard’st thou that shameful word and blow
 Brought Roderick’s vengeance on his foe ?
 What recked the Chieftain, if he stood
 On Highland heath or Holy-Rood ?
 He rights such wrong where it is given,
 If it were in the court of heaven.”
 “Still was it outrage ;—yet, ’tis true,
 Not then claimed sovereignty his due ;
 While Albany, with feeble hand,

Held borrowed truncheon of command,*
The young king, mew'd in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain
His herds and harvests reared in vain—
Methinks a soul, like thine, should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne."

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answered with disdainful smile,—
"Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee send delighted eye,
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that softened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread,
For fattened steer or household bread;
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
'To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.'
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain;
While, of ten thousand herds, there strays

* There is scarcely a more disorderly period in Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V

But one along yon river's maze,—
 The Gael, of plain and river heir,
 Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.*
 Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
 That plundering Lowland field and fold
 Is aught but retribution true?
 Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."

VIII.

Answered Fitz-James—"And, if I sought,
 Think'st thou no other could be brought?
 What deem ye of my path waylaid?
 My life given o'er to ambuscade?"

"As of a meed to rashness due:
 Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,—
 I seek my hound, or falcon strayed,
 I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
 Free hadst thou been to come and go:
 But secret path marks secret foe.
 Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
 Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
 Save to fulfil an augury."—

"Well, let it pass; nor will I now
 Fresh cause of enmity avow,
 To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
 Enough, I am by promise tied
 To match me with this man of pride:
 Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
 In peace; but when I come agen,
 I come with banner, brand, and bow,
 As leader seeks his mortal foe.
 For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
 Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
 As I, until before me stand
 This rebel Chieftain and his band!"—

IX.

"Have then thy wish!"—he whistled shrill,
 And he was answered from the hill;

* The Gael, great traditional historians, never forgot that the Lowlands had, at some remote period, been the property of their Celtic forefathers, which furnished an ample vindication of all the ravages that they could make on the unfortunate districts which lay within their reach.

Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnetts, and spears, and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprang up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken-bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fixed his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James—"How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon—I am Roderick Dhu!"

X.

Fitz-James was brave:—though to his heart
The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
He manned himself with dauntless air,
Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before:—
"Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I!"
Sir Roderick marked—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel

In foemen worthy of their steel.
 Short space he stood—then waved his hand :
 Down sank the disappearing band ;
 Each warrior vanished where he stood,
 In broom or bracken, heath or wood ;
 Sank brand and spear and bended bow,
 In osiers pale and copses low ;
 It seemed as if their mother Earth
 Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
 The wind's last breath had tossed in air
 Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
 The next but swept a lone hill-side,
 Where heath and fern were waving wide :
 The sun's last glance was glinted back,
 From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
 The next, all unreflected, shone
 On bracken green and cold gray stone.

XI.

Fitz-James looked round—yet scarce believed
 The witness that his sight received ;
 Such apparition well might seem
 Delusion of a dreadful dream.
 Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
 And to his look the Chief replied :
 " Fear naught—nay, that I need not say—
 But—doubt not aught from mine array.
 Thou art my guest ;—I pledged my word
 As far as Coilantogle ford :
 Nor would I call a clansman's brand
 For aid against one valiant hand,
 Though on our strife lay every vale
 Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
 So move we on ;—I only meant
 To show the reed on which you leant,
 Deeming this path you might pursue
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu."
 They moved :—I said Fitz-James was brave
 As ever knight that belted glaive ;
 Yet dare not say, that now his blood
 Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
 As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
 That seeming lonesome pathway through,

Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
With lances, that to take his life
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonored and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanished guardians of the ground,
And still from copse and heather deep,
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain,
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush, nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.*
And here his course the Chieftain staid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:—
“Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust
This murderous chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here, all vantageless I stand,
Armed, like thyself, with single brand;

* Upon a small eminence, called the *Dun* of Bochastle, and indeed on the plain itself, are some intrenchments which have been thought Roman. There is adjacent to Callander a villa, entitled the Roman Camp.

For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

XIII.

The Saxon paused:—"I ne'er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade;
Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death:
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can naught but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?"—"No, Stranger, none!
And hear—to fire thy flagging zeal—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate, by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead—
'Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife.'"
"Then, by my word," the Saxon said,
"The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate has solved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favor free,
I plight mine honor, oath, and word,
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand,
That aids thee now to guard thy land."

XIV.

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye—
"Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate:—
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared? By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valor light

As that of some vain carpet-knight,
 Who ill deserved my courteous care,
 And whose best boast is but to wear
 A braid of his fair lady's hair."
 "I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
 It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
 For I have sworn this braid to stain
 In the best blood that warms thy vein.
 Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, be gone!—
 Yet think not that by thee alone,
 Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
 Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
 Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
 Of this small horn one feeble blast
 Would fearful odds against thee cast.
 But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
 We try this quarrel hilt to hilt."
 Then each at once his falchion drew,
 Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
 Each looked to sun, and stream, and plain,
 As what they ne'er might see again;
 Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
 In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
 That on the field his targe he threw,*
 Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
 Had death so often dashed aside;
 For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
 Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.†
 He practised every pass and ward,
 To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
 While less expert, though stronger far,
 The Gael maintained unequal war.
 Three times in closing strife they stood,
 And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;

* A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment. A person thus armed had a considerable advantage in private fray.

† The use of defensive armor, and particularly of the buckler or target, was general in Queen Elizabeth's time, although that of the single rapier seems to have been occasionally practised much earlier

No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
 The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
 Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
 And showered his blows like wintry rain;
 And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
 Against the winter shower is proof,
 The foe, invulnerable still,
 Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
 Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
 Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
 And backward borne upon the lea,
 Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

“Now yield thee, or, by Him who made
 The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!”
 “Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
 Let recreant yield, who fears to die.”
 Like adder darting from his coil,
 Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
 Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
 Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprang;
 Received, but recked not of a wound,
 And locked his arms his foeman round.
 Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
 No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
 That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
 Through bars of brass and triple steel!
 They tug, they strain!—down, down, they go,
 The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
 The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed,
 His knee was planted in his breast;
 His clotted locks he backward threw,
 Across his brow his hand he drew,
 From blood and mist to clear his sight,
 Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!—
 But hate and fury ill supplied
 The stream of life's exhausted tide,
 And all too late the advantage came,
 To turn the odds of deadly game;
 For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
 Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye.
 Down came the blow! but in the heath

The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp ;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII.

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeemed, unhopèd, from desperate strife:
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appeared his last ;
In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid,
"Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid ;
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that Faith and Valor give."
With that he blew a bugle-note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet ;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln-green ;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
By loosened rein, a saddled steed ;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James reined up his horse,
With wonder viewed the bloody spot—
"Exclaim not, gallants! question not.
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight ;
Let the gray palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight ;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high ; I must be boune,
To see the archer-game at noon ;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me!

XVIII.

"Stand, Bayard, stand!" the steed obeyed,
With arching neck and bended head,

And glancing eye, and quivering ear,
 As if he loved his lord to hear.
 No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
 No grasp upon the saddle laid,
 But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
 And lightly bounded from the plain,
 Turned on the horse his armed heel,
 And stirred his courage with the steel.
 Bounded the fiery steed in air,
 The rider sate erect and fair,
 Then, like a bolt, from steel cross-bow
 Forth launched, along the plain they go.
 They dashed that rapid torrent through,
 And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
 Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
 His merry-men followed as they might.
 Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
 And in the race they mock thy tide;
 Torry and Lendrick now are past,
 And Deanstown lies behind them east!
 They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
 They sink in distant woodland soon;
 Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
 They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre;
 They mark just glance and disappear
 The lofty brow of ancient Keir;
 They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
 Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
 And on the opposing shore take ground,
 With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
 Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-forth,
 And soon the bulwark of the North,
 Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
 Upon their fleet career looked down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strained,
 Sudden his steed the leader reined;
 A signal to his squire he flung,
 Who instant to his stirrup sprung:—
 "Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman gray,
 Who townward holds the rocky way,
 Of stature tall and poor array?

Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
 With which he scales the mountain side?
 Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?"
 "No, by my word;—a burly groom
 He seems, who in the field or chase
 A Baron's train would nobly grace."
 "Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply
 And jealousy, no sharper eye?
 Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
 That stately form and step I knew;
 Like form in Scotland is not seen,
 Treads not such step on Scottish green.
 'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
 The uncle of the banished Earl.
 Away, away, to court, to show
 The near approach of dreaded foe:
 The king must stand upon his guard;
 Douglas and he must meet prepared."
 Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and straight
 They won the castle's postern gate.

XX.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
 From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey'gray,
 Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
 Held sad communion with himself:—
 "Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
 A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
 And fiery Roderick soon will feel
 The vengeance of the royal steel.
 I, only I, can ward their fate—
 God grant the ransom come not late!
 The Abbess hath her promise given,
 My child shall be the bride of heaven:—
 Be pardoned one repining tear!
 For He who gave her, knows how dear,
 How excellent—but that is by,
 And now my business is to die.
 Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
 A Douglas by his sovereign bled,
 And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
 That oft has heard the death-axe sound,*

* Stirling was often polluted with noble blood. The fate of William, eighth

As on the noblest of the land
 Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand—
 The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
 Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
 But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
 Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
 And see! upon the crowded street,
 In motley groups what maskers meet;
 Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
 And merry morrice-dancers come.
 I guess, by all this quaint array,
 The burghers hold their sports to-day.
 James will be there—he loves such show,
 Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
 And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
 As well as where, in proud career,
 The high-born tilter shivers spear.
 I'll follow to the Castle-park,
 And play my prize—King James shall mark,
 If age has tamed these sinews stark,
 Whose force so oft, in happier days,
 His boyish wonder loved to praise.”*

XXI.

The Castle gates were open flung,
 The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung,
 And echoed loud the flinty street
 Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
 As slowly down the deep descent
 Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
 While all along the crowded way
 Was jubilee and loud huzza.

Earl of Douglas, whom James the Second stabbed in Stirling Castle with his own hand, and while under his royal safe-conduct, is familiar to all who read Scottish history. Murdock, Duke of Albany, Duncan, Earl of Lennox, his father-in-law, and his two sons, Walter and Alexander Stewart, were executed at Stirling in 1425. They were beheaded upon an eminence without the castle walls, but making part of the same hill.

* Every burgh of Scotland had its solemn *play*, or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period. James V.'s ready participation in these popular amusements was one cause of his acquiring the title of King of the Commons. The usual prize to the best shooter was a silver arrow.

And ever James was bending low,
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame.
And well the simperer might be vain—
He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant's quaint attire,
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,
“Long live the Commons' King, King James i'
Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.
But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern:
There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
And the mean burghers' joy disdained;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banished man,
There thought upon their own gray tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themselves a shameful part
Of pageant, which they cursed in heart.

XXII.

Now in the Castle-park, drew out
Their checkered bands the joyous route.
There morricers, with bell at heel,
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood* and all his band—
Friar Tuck with quarter-staff and cowl,
Old Scathelock with his surly scowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill.

* The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favorite frolic in Scotland as well as England at such festivals as we are describing. The game of Robin Hood was usually acted in May.

The Douglas bent a bow of might—
 His first shaft centered in the white,
 And when in turn he shot again,
 His second split the first in twain.
 From the King's hand must Douglas take
 A silver dart, the archers' stake;
 Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
 Some answering glance of sympathy—
 No kind emotion made reply!
 Indifferent as to archer wight,
 The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
 The manly wrestlers take their stand.
 Two o'er the rest superior rose,
 And proud demanded mightier foes,
 Nor called in vain; for Douglas came.
 —For life, is Hugh of Larbert lame;
 Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
 Whom senseless home his comrades bear.
 Prize of the wrestling match, the King
 To Douglas gave a golden ring,*
 While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
 As frozen drop of winter dew.
 Douglas would speak, but in his breast
 His struggling soul his words suppressed:
 Indignant then he turned him where
 Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
 To hurl the massive bar in air.
 When each his utmost strength had shown,
 The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
 From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
 And sent the fragment through the sky,
 A rood beyond the farthest mark;
 And still in Stirling's royal park,
 The gray-haired sires who know the past,
 To strangers point the Douglas-cast,
 And moralize on the decay
 Of Scottish strength in modern day.

* The usual prize of a wrestling was a ram and a ring. The ram not being very poetical is omitted in the story.

XXIV.

The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang;
The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
A purse well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now, with anxious wonder, scan,
And sharper glance, the dark gray man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas' blood belong:
The old men marked, and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each son
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;
The youth, with awe and wonder, saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmurs rose to clamors loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King,
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the banished man to mind;
No, not from those who, at the chase,
Once held his side the honored place,
Begirt his board, and, in the field,
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he, whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known?

XXV.

The monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favorite greyhounds should pull down,
That venison free, and Bordeaux wine,
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra—who from Douglas' side

Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
 The fleetest hound in all the North—
 Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
 She left the royal hounds mid-way,
 And, dashing on the antlered prey,
 Sank her sharp muzzle in his flank,
 And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
 The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
 By strange intruder broken short,
 Came up, and, with his leash unbound,
 In anger struck the noble hound.
 The Douglas had endured, that morn,
 The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
 And last, and worst to spirit proud,
 Had borne the pity of the crowd;
 But Lufra had been fondly bred,
 To share his board, to watch his bed,
 And oft would Ellen, Lufra's neck,
 In maiden glee, with garlands deck;
 They were such playmates, that with name
 Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
 His stifled wrath is brimming high,
 In darkened brow and flashing eye;
 As waves before the bark divide,
 The crowd gave way before his stride;
 Needs but a buffet and no more,
 The groom lies senseless in his gore.
 Such blow no other hand could deal,
 Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI.

Then clamored loud the royal train,
 And brandished swords and staves amain;
 But stern the Baron's warning—"Back!
 Back on your lives, ye menial pack!
 Beware the Douglas. Yes! behold,
 King James, the Douglas, doomed of old,
 And vainly sought for near and far,
 A victim to atone the war,
 A willing victim, now attends,
 Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."
 "Thus is my clemency repaid?
 Presumptuous Lord!" the monarch said;

"Of thy misproud ambitious clan,
 Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
 The only man, in whom a foe
 My woman-mercy would not know :
 But shall a Monarch's presence brook
 Injurious blow, and haughty look ?
 What ho ! the Captain of our Guard !
 Give the offender fitting ward.
 Break off the sports !" — for tumult rose,
 And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows —
 "Break off the sports !" he said, and frowned,
 "And bid our horsemen clear the ground."

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and misarray
 Marred the fair form of festal day.
 The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
 Repelled by threats and insult loud ;
 To earth are borne the old and weak,
 The timorous fly, the women shriek ;
 With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
 The hardier urge tumultuous war.
 At once round Douglas darkly sweep
 The royal spears in circle deep,
 And slowly scale the pathway steep ;
 While on their rear in thunder pour
 The rabble with disordered roar.
 With grief the noble Douglas saw
 The commons rise against the law,
 And to the leading soldier said,
 "Sir John of Hyndford ! 'twas my blade
 That knighthood on thy shoulder laid ;
 For that good deed, permit me then
 A word with these misguided men.

XXVIII.

"Hear, gentle friends ! ere yet, for me,
 Ye break the bands of fealty.
 My life, my honor, and my cause,
 I tender free to Scotland's laws.
 Are these so weak as must require
 The aid of your misguided ire ?
 Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,

Is then my selfish rage so strong,
 My sense of public weal so low,
 That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
 Those chords of love I should unbind,
 Which knit my country and my kind?
 Oh no! Believe, in yonder tower
 It will not soothe my captive hour,
 To know those spears our foes should dread
 For me in kindred gore are red;
 To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
 For me, that mother wails her son;
 For me, that widow's mate expires,
 For me, that orphans weep their sires,
 That patriots mourn insulted laws,
 And curse the Douglas for the cause.
 Oh let your patience ward such ill,
 And keep your right to love me still!"

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
 In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
 With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
 For blessings on his generous head,
 Who for his country felt alone,
 Who prized her blood beyond his own.
 Old men, upon the verge of life,
 Blessed him who staid the civil strife;
 And mothers held their babes on high,
 The self-devoted chief to spy,
 Triumphant over wrong and ire,
 To whom the prattlers owed a sire:
 Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
 As if behind some bier beloved,
 With trailing arms and drooping head,
 The Douglas up the hill he led,
 And at the castle's battled verge,
 With sighs, resigned his honored charge.

XXX.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
 With bitter thought and swelling heart,
 And would not now vouchsafe again
 Through Stirling streets to lead his train.

"O Lennox, who would wish to rule
 This changeling crowd, this common fool?
 Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud acclaim
 With which they shout the Douglas' name?
 With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
 Strained for King James their morning note;
 With like acclaim they hailed the day
 When first I broke the Douglas' sway;
 And like acclaim would Douglas greet,
 If he could hurl me from my seat.
 Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
 Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?
 Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
 And fickle as a changeful dream;
 Fantastic as a woman's mood,
 And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
 Thou many-headed monster-thing,
 Oh who would wish to be thy king!

XXXI.

"But soft! what messenger of speed
 Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
 I guess his cognizance afar—
 What from our cousin, John of Mar?"
 "He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
 Within the safe and guarded ground:
 For some foul purpose yet unknown—
 Most sure for evil to the throne—
 The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Has summoned his rebellious crew;
 'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
 These loose banditti stand arrayed.
 The Earl of Mar, this morn, from Doune,
 To break their muster marched, and soon
 Your grace will hear of battle fought;
 But earnestly the Earl besought,
 Till for such danger he provide,
 With scanty train you will not ride."

XXXII.

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,—
 I should have earlier looked to this:
 I lost it in this bustling day.

Retrace with speed thy former way,
 Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
 The best of mine shall be thy meed.
 Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
 We do forbid the intended war:
 Roderick, this morn, in single fight,
 Was made our prisoner by a knight,
 And Douglas hath himself and cause
 Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
 The tidings of their leaders lost
 Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
 Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
 For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
 Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly."
 He turned his steed—"My liege, I hie,
 Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
 I fear the broadswords will be drawn."
 The turf the flying courser spurned,
 And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII.

Ill with King James's mood that day
 Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
 Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
 And soon cut short the festal song.
 Nor less upon the saddened town
 The evening sank in sorrow down;
 The burghers spoke of civil jar,
 Of rumored feuds and mountain war,
 Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
 All up in arms: the Douglas too,
 They mourned him pent within the hold
 "Where stout Earl William was of old"—
 And there his word the speaker staid.
 And finger on his lip he laid,
 Or pointed to his dagger blade.
 But jaded horsemen from the west,
 At evening to the castle pressed;
 And busy talkers said they bore
 Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
 At noon the deadly fray begun,

* Stabbed by James II. in Stirling Castle.

And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumor shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH.

The Guard-Room.

I.

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and oh! what scenes of woe,
Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam!
The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds it stream;
The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thoughts of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble
wail.

II.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
While drums, with rolling note, foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barred,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.

In comfortless alliance shone
 The lights through arch of blackened stone,
 And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
 Faces deformed with beard and scar,
 All haggard from the midnight watch,
 And fevered with the stern debauch ;
 For the oak table's massive board,
 Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
 And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown,
 Showed in what sport the night had flown.
 Some, weary, snored on floor and bench ;
 Some labored still their thirst to quench ;
 Some, chilled with watching, spread their hands
 O'er the huge chimney's dying brands,
 While round them, or beside them flung,
 At every step their harness rung.

III.

These drew not for their fields the sword,
 Like tenants of a feudal lord,
 Nor owned the patriarchal claim
 Of chieftain in their leader's name ;
 Adventurers* they, from far who roved,
 To live by battle which they loved.
 There the Italian's clouded face,
 The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace ;
 The mountain-loving Switzer there
 More freely breathed in mountain air,
 The Fleming there despised the soil,
 That paid so ill the laborer's toil ;
 Their rolls showed French and German name ;
 And merry England's exiles came,
 To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
 Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
 All brave in arms, well trained to wield
 The heavy halberd, brand, and shield ;
 In camps, licentious, wild, and bold ;
 In pillage, fierce and uncontrolled ;
 And now, by holytide and feast,
 From rules of discipline released.

* James V. seems first to have introduced, in addition to the national militia, the service of a small number of mercenaries, who formed a body guard, called the Foot-Band.

IV.

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and, 'mid their words,
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sank their tone to spare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs and bodies gored,
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighboring to the court of guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard;—
Sad burdened to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—
At length upstarted John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,
In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew,
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved that day their games cut short,
And marred the dicer's brawling sport,
And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
And, while a merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and spear."

V.

SOLDIER'S SONG.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black jack,
And seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
Drink upsees* out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
Says that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

* A Bacchanalian interjection, borrowed from the Dutch.

Our vicar thus preaches—and why should he not?
 For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
 And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
 Who infringe the domains of our good mother Church.
 Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
 Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI.

The warder's challenge heard without,
 Stayed in mid roar the merry shout.
 A soldier to the portal went—
 "Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
 And, beat for jubilee the drum!
 A maid and minstrel with him come."
 Bertram, a Fleming, gray and scarred,
 Was entering now the court of guard,
 A harper with him, and, in plaid
 All muffled close, a mountain maid,
 Who backward shrank to 'scape the view
 Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
 "What news?" they roared:—"I only know,
 From noon till eve we fought with foe,
 As wild and as untameable,
 As the rude mountains where they dwell.
 On both sides store of blood is lost,
 Nor much success can either boast."
 "But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
 As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
 Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
 Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp,
 Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
 The leader of a juggler band."*

VII.

"No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
 After the fight, these sought our line,
 That aged harper and the girl,
 And, having audience of the Earl,
 Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
 And bring them hitherward with speed.

* The jongleurs or jugglers were wont to travel the country, attended by a woman called a glee-maiden, who amused the company by dancing and tumbling, and frequently an ape that diverted them with its tricks.

Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm."
"Hear ye his boast!" cried John of Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
"Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepped between,
And dropped at once the tartan screen;
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May, through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII.

Boldly she spoke—"Soldiers, attend!
My father was the soldier's friend;
Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant or the strong,
Should exile's daughter suffer wrong."
Answered De Brent, most forward still
In every feat or good or ill,
"I shame me of the part I played;
And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by Forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cause.
Poor Rose—if Rose be living now"—
He wiped his iron eye and brow,
"Must bear such age, I think, as thou.
Hear ye, my mates; I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o'er,
To do the maid injurious part,

My shaft shall quiver in his heart!
 Beware loose speech, or jesting rough:
 Ye all know John de Brent. Enough."

IX.

Their Captain came, a gallant young—
 (Of Tullibardine's house he sprung):
 Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
 Gay was his mien, his humor light,
 And, though by courtesy controlled,
 Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
 The high-born maiden ill could brook
 The scanning of his curious look
 And dauntless eye; and yet, in sooth,
 Young Lewis was a generous youth;
 But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
 Ill-suited to the garb and scene,
 Might lightly bear construction strange,
 And give loose fancy scope to range.
 "Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
 Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
 On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
 Like errant damosel of yore?
 Does thy high quest a knight require,
 Or may the venture suit a squire?"
 Her dark eye flashed; she paused and sighed,
 "Oh what have I to do with pride!—
 Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
 A suppliant for a father's life,
 I crave an audience of the King.
 Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
 The royal pledge of grateful claims,
 Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."

X.

The signet-ring young Lewis took,
 With deep respect and altered look;
 And said—"This ring our duties own;
 And pardon, if, to worth unknown,
 In semblance mean obscurely veiled,
 Lady, in aught my folly failed.
 Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
 The King shall know what suitor waits.

Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour;
Female attendance shall obey
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way.”
But, ere she followed, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared
Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took;
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden’s hold
Forced bluntly back the proffered gold;—
“Forgive a haughty English heart,
And oh, forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I’ll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar.”
With thanks—’twas all she could—the maid
His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent:—
“My lady safe, oh let your grace
Give me to see my master’s face!
His minstrel I—to share his doom,
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief’s birth begins our care;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse,
A doleful tribute! o’er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot;
It is my right—deny it not!”

“Little we reckon,” said John of Brent,
 “We southern men, of long descent;
 Nor wot we how a name—a word—
 Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
 Yet kind my noble landlord’s part—
 God bless the house of Beaudesert!
 And, but I loved to drive the deer,
 More than to guide the laboring steer,
 I had not dwelt an outcast here.
 Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
 Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see.”

XII.

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
 A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
 Lighted a torch, and Allan led
 Through grated arch and passage dread.
 Portals they passed, where, deep within,
 Spoke prisoner’s moan and fetters’ din;
 Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
 Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman’s sword,
 And many a hideous engine grim,
 For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,
 By artists formed, who deemed it shame
 And sin to give their work a name.
 They halted at a low-browed porch,
 And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
 While bolt and chain he backward rolled,
 And made the bar unhasp its hold.
 They entered—’twas a prison-room
 Of stern security and gloom,
 Yet not a dungeon; for the day
 Through lofty gratings found its way,
 And rude and antique garniture
 Decked the sad walls and oaken floor;
 Such as the rugged days of old,
 Deemed fit for captive noble’s hold.
 “Here,” said De Brent, “thou mayst remain
 Till the Leach visit him again.
 Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
 To tend the noble prisoner well.”
 Retiring then the bolt he drew,
 And the lock’s murmurs growled anew.

Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
 A captive feebly raised his head;
 The wondering Minstrel looked, and knew
 Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
 For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
 They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought.

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
 Shall never stem the billows more,
 Deserted by her gallant band,
 Amid the breakers lies astrand,
 So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu!
 And oft his fevered limbs he threw
 In toss abrupt, as when her sides
 Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
 That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
 Yet cannot heave her from her seat.
 Oh! how unlike her course on sea!
 Or his free step on hill and lea!—
 Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
 “What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
 My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all!
 Have they been ruined in my fall?
 Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?
 Yet speak—speak boldly!—do not fear.”
 (For Allan, who his mood well knew,
 Was choked with grief and terror too.)
 “Who fought?—who fled? Old man, be brief;
 Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
 Who basely live? who bravely died?”—
 “Oh, calm thee, Chief!” the Minstrel cried,
 “Ellen is safe;”—“For that, thank Heaven!”—
 “And hopes are for the Douglas given;
 The Lady Margaret too is well,
 And, for thy clan—on field or fell,
 Has never harp of minstrel told,
 Of combat fought so true and bold.
 Thy stately pine is yet unbent,
 Though many a goodly bough is rent.”

XIV.

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
 And fever's fire was in his eye;

But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
 Checkered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
 —“Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play
 With measure bold on festal day,
 In yon lone isle . . . again where ne'er
 Shall harper play, or warrior hear . . .
 That stirring air that peals on high,
 O'er Dermid's race our victory.
 Strike it! and then (for well thou canst)
 Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
 Fling me the picture of the fight,
 When met my clan the Saxon might.
 I'll listen, till my fancy hears
 The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
 These grates, these walls, shall vanish then,
 For the fair field of fighting men,
 And my free spirit burst away,
 As if it soared from battle fray.”
 The trembling bard with awe obeyed—
 Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
 But soon remembrance of the sight
 He witnessed from the mountain's height,
 With what old Bertram told at night,
 Awakened the full power of song,
 And bore him in career along;—
 As shallop launched on river's tide,
 That slow and fearful leaves the side,
 But, when it feels the middle stream,
 Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV.

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE.*

“The Minstrel came once more to view
 The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
 For, ere he parted, he would say,
 Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
 Where shall he find, in foreign land,

* A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus called in the Trosachs, and closed with the remarkable incident mentioned in the text. It happened, however, so late as the invasion of Scotland by Oliver Cromwell, one of whose soldiers was thus slain just as he had almost secured the means of conveyance for his companions to the island at the extremity of Loch Katrine. His party on witnessing his fate, abandoned their ferocious enterprise.

So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!—
 There is no breeze upon the fern,
 No ripple on the lake,
 Upon her eyrie nods the erne,
 The deer has sought the brake;
 The small birds will not sing aloud,
 The springing trout lies still,
 So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,
 That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
 Benledi's distant hill.
 Is it the thunder's solemn sound
 That mutters deep and dread,
 Or echoes from the groaning ground
 The warrior's measured tread?
 Is it the lightning's quivering glance
 That on the thicket streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance
 The sun's retiring beams?
 —I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
 I see the Moray's silver star,
 Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
 That up the lake comes winding far!
 To hero boune for battle-strife,
 Or bard of martial lay,
 'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
 One glance at their array!

XVI.

“Their light-armed archers far and near
 Surveyed the tangled ground,
 Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
 A twilight forest frowned,
 Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
 The stern battalia crowned.
 No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
 Still were the pipe and drum;
 Save heavy tread, and armor's clang,
 The sullen march was dumb.
 There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
 Or wave their flags abroad;
 Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
 That shadowed o'er their road.
 Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,

Can rouse no lurking foe,
 Nor spy a trace of living thing,
 Save when they stirred the roe;
 The host moves, like a deep-sea wave,
 Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
 High-swelling, dark, and slow.
 The lake is passed, and now they gain
 A narrow and a broken plain,
 Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
 And here the horse and spearmen pause,
 While, to explore the dangerous glen,
 Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII.

“At once there rose so wild a yell
 Within that dark and narrow dell,
 As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
 Had pealed the banner-cry of hell!
 Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
 Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
 The archery appear:
 For life! for life! their flight they ply—
 And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
 And plaids and bonnets waving high,
 And broadswords flashing to the sky,
 Are maddening in their rear.
 Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
 Pursuers and pursued;
 Before that tide of flight and chase,
 How shall it keep its rooted place,
 The spearmen's twilight wood?—
 ‘Down, down,’ cried Mar, ‘your lances down:
 Bear back both friend and foe!’
 Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
 That serried grove of lances brown
 At once lay levelled low;
 And closely shouldering side to side,
 The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
 ‘We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
 As their Tinchel* cows the game!

A circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding a great space, and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, which usually made desperate efforts to break through the *Tinchel*.

They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'

XVIII.

“ Bearing before them, in their course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.

Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below ;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurled them on the foe.

I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash ;
I heard the broadswords' deadly clang,
As if a hundred anvils rang !

But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank—

‘ My banner-man, advance !

I see,’ he cried, ‘ their column shake.

Now, gallants ! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance !’

The horsemen dashed among the rout,
As deer break through the broom ;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon make lightsome room.

Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—

Where, where was Roderick then !

One blast upon his bugle-horn

Were worth a thousand men.

And reflux through the pass of fear

The battle's tide was poured ;

Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,

Vanished the mountain sword.

As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,

Receives her roaring linn,

As the dark caverns of the deep

Suck the wild whirlpool in,

So did the deep and darksome pass

Devour the battle's mingled mass :

None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX.

“Now westward rolls the battle’s din,
That deep and doubling pass within.
Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on: its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosachs’ dread defile
Opens on Katrine’s lake and isle.
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.

The sun is set—the clouds are met—

The lowering scowl of heaven

An inky hue of livid blue

To the deep lake has given;

Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen

Swept o’er the lake, then sunk agen.

I heeded not the eddying surge,

Mine eye but saw the Trosachs’ gorge,

Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,

Which like an earthquake shook the ground,

And spoke the stern and desperate strife

That parts not but with parting life,

Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll

The dirge of many a passing soul.

Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen

The martial flood disgorged agen,

But not in mingled tide;

The plaided warriors of the North,

High on the mountain thunder forth,

And overhang its side;

While by the lake below appears

The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.

At weary bay each shattered band,

Eying their foemen, sternly stand;

Their banners stream like tattered sail,

That flings its fragments to the gale,

And broken arms and disarray

Marked the fell havoc of the day.

XX.

“Viewing the mountain’s ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,

Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried—'Behold yon isle!
See! none are left to guard its strand,
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.'
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corslet rung,
He plunged him in the wave;—
All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
And to their clamors Benvenue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Poured down at once the lowering heaven;
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
Her billows reared their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him showered, 'mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.—
In vain. He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
—Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame:—
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand:
It darkened—but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan.
Another flash!—the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI.

“ ‘Revenge! revenge!’ the Saxons cried,
 The Gaels’ exulting shout replied. .
 Despite the elemental rage,
 Again they hurried to engage;
 But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
 Bloody with spurring came a knight,
 Sprung from his horse, and, from a crag,
 Waved ’twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
 Clarion and trumpet by his side
 Rang forth a truce-note high and wide.
 While, in the Monarch’s name, afar
 A herald’s voice forbade the war,
 For Bothwell’s lord, and Roderick bold,
 Were both, he said, in captive hold.”
 —But here the lay made sudden stand!
 The harp escaped the Minstrel’s hand!—
 Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
 How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:
 At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
 With lifted hand, kept feeble time;
 That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
 Varied his look as changed the song;
 At length, no more his deafened ear
 The minstrel melody can hear;
 His face grows sharp—his hands are clenched,
 As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
 Set are his teeth, his fading eye
 Is sternly fixed on vacancy.
 Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
 His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu!—
 Old Allan-Bane looked on aghast,
 While grim and still his spirit passed:
 But when he saw that life was fled,
 He poured his wailing o’er the dead.

XXII.

LAMENT.

“ And art thou cold, and lowly laid,
 Thy foeman’s dread, thy people’s aid,
 Breadalbane’s boast, Clan-Alpine’s shade!
 For thee shall none a requiem say?

—For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,
For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
The shelter of her exiled line,
E'en in this prison-house of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honored Pine!

“What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.
Oh, woe for Alpine's honored Pine!

“Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prisoned eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honored Pine.”

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart,
Where played, with many-colored gleams,
Through storied pane, the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lightened up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or, if she looked, 'twas but to say,
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,

Her station claimed with jealous pride:
 And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
 Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
 Whose answer, oft at random made,
 The wandering of his thoughts betrayed,—
 Those who such simple joys have known,
 Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
 But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
 The window seeks with cautious tread.
 What distant music has the power
 To win her in this woful hour!
 'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
 Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV.

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN.

“My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
 My idle greyhound loathes his food,
 My horse is weary of his stall,
 And I am sick of captive thrall.
 I wish I were, as I have been,
 Hunting the hart in forest green,
 With bended bow and bloodhound free,
 For that's the life is meet for me.

“I hate to learn the ebb of time,
 From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
 Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
 Inch after inch, along the wall.
 The lark was wont my matins ring,
 The sable rook my vespers sing;
 These towers, although a king's they be,
 Have not a hall of joy for me.

“No more at dawning morn I rise,
 And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
 Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
 And homeward wend with evening dew;
 A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
 And lay my trophies at her feet,
 While fled the eve on wings of glee,—
 That life is lost to love and me!”

XXV.

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The listener had not turned her head,
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.
She turned the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain.
"Oh welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she said;
"How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt"—"Oh say not so!
To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lead his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come!—'tis more than time;
He holds his court at morning prime."
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whispered hope and cheer;
Her faltering steps half led, half staid,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till, at his touch, its wings of pride,
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And, from their tissue, fancy frames
Ærial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed;
For him she sought who owned this state,
The dreaded prince whose will was fate.

She gazed on many a princely port,
 Might well have ruled a royal court;
 On many a splendid garb she gazed—
 Then turned bewildered and amazed,
 For all stood bare; and, in the room,
 Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
 To him each lady's look was lent,
 On him each courtier's eye was bent;
 Midst furs, and silks, and jewels sheen,
 He stood, in simple Lincoln-green,
 The centre of the glittering ring—
 And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's King!*

XXVII.

As wreath of snow, on mountain breast,
 Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
 Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
 And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
 No word her choking voice commands—
 She showed the ring—she clasped her hands.
 Oh! not a moment could he brook,
 The generous prince, that suppliant look!
 Gently he raised her—and the while
 Checked with a glance the circle's smile.
 Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,
 And bade her terrors be dismissed—
 "Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
 The fealty of Scotland claims.
 To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring—
 He will redeem his signet-ring.
 Ask naught for Douglas—yester even,
 His prince and he have much forgiven.
 Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
 I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
 We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
 Yield what they craved with clamor loud;
 Calmly we heard and judged his cause,

* James V., from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, was, as we have seen, popularly termed the *King of the Commons*. For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gal-lantry, he used to traverse the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises.

Our council aided and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern,
With stout De Vaux and gray Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne.
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid."

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
When it can say, with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On Nature's raptures long should pry;
He stepped between—"Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims,*
And Normans call me James Fitz-James
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause."
Then, in a tone apart and low,
—"Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue,
In dangerous hour, and all but gave

* William of Worcester, who wrote about the middle of the fifteenth century, calls Stirling Castle Snowdoun. It was probably derived from the romantic legend which connected Stirling with King Arthur, to which the mention of the round table gives countenance.

Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!"
 Aloud he spoke—"Thou still dost hold
 That little talisman of gold,
 Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
 What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden guessed
 He probed the weakness of her breast;
 But, with that consciousness, there came
 A lightening of her fears for Græme,
 And more she deemed the Monarch's ire
 Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her sire,
 Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
 And, to her generous feeling true,
 She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
 "Forbear thy suit:—the King of kings
 Alone can stay life's parting wings.
 I know his heart, I know his hand,
 Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand:—
 My fairest earldom would I give
 To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—
 Hast thou no other boon to crave?
 No other captive friend to save?"
 Blushing, she turned her from the King,
 And to the Douglas gave the ring,
 As if she wished her sire to speak
 The suit that stained her glowing cheek.—
 "Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
 And stubborn justice holds her course.—
 Malcolm, come forth!"—And, at the word,
 Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
 "For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
 From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
 Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
 Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
 And sought amid thy faithful clan,
 A refuge for an outlawed man,
 Dishonoring thus thy loyal name.
 Fetters and warder for the Græme!"—
 His chain of gold the King unstrung,
 The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
 Then gently drew the glittering band,
 And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

Harp of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight cove the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with Nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp!

Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.

Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,

When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.

That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,

Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!

'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.

Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,

And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—

And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thewell!

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THE

VISION OF DON RODERICK.

THE following Poem is founded upon a Spanish tradition, particularly detailed in the notes; but bearing, in general, that Don Roderick, the last Gothic King of Spain, when the invasion of the Moors was impending, had the temerity to descend into an ancient vault, near Toledo, the opening of which had been denounced as fatal to the Spanish monarchy. The legend adds, that his rash curiosity was mortified by an emblematical representation of those Saracens who, in the year 714, defeated him in battle, and reduced Spain under their dominion. I have presumed to prolong the vision of the revolutions of Spain down to the present eventful crisis of the Peninsula; and to divide it, by a supposed change of scene, into *three periods*. The *first* of these represents the invasion of the Moors, the defeat and death of Roderick, and closes with the peaceful occupation of the country by the victors. The *second period* embraces the state of the Peninsula, when the conquests of the Spaniards and Portuguese in the East and West Indies had raised to the highest pitch the renown of their arms; sullied, however, by superstition and cruelty. An allusion to the inhumanities of the Inquisition terminates this picture. The *last part* of the poem opens with the state of Spain previous to the unparalleled treachery of Bonaparte; gives a sketch of the usurpation attempted upon that unsuspecting and friendly kingdom, and terminates with the arrival of the British succors. It may be further proper to mention, that the object of the poem is less to commemorate or detail particular incidents, than to exhibit a general and impressive picture of the several periods brought upon the stage.

I am too sensible of the respect due to the public, especially by one who has already experienced more than ordinary indulgence, to offer any apology for the inferiority of the poetry to the subject it is chiefly designed to commemorate. Yet I think it proper to mention, that, while I was hastily executing a work, written for a temporary purpose, and on passing events, the task was most cruelly interrupted by the successive deaths of Lord President Blair and Lord Viscount Melville. In those distinguished characters, I had not only to regret persons whose lives were most important to Scotland, but also whose notice and patronage honored my entrance upon active life; and I may add, with melancholy pride, who permitted my more advanced age to claim no common share in their friendship. Under such interruptions, the following verses, which my best and happiest efforts must have left far unworthy of their theme, have, I am myself sensible, an appearance of negligence and incoherence, which, in other circumstances, I might have been able to remove.

EDINBURGH, *June 24, 1811.*

THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

QUID DIGNUM MEMORARE TUIS, HISPANIA, TERRIS,
VOX HUMANA VALET. CLAUDIAN.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

LIVES there a strain, whose sounds of mounting fire,
May rise distinguished o'er the din of war ;
Or died it with yon Master of the Lyre,
Who sung beleagured Ilion's evil star ?
Such, WELLINGTON, might reach thee from afar,
Wafting its descant wide o'er Ocean's range ;
Nor shouts, nor clashing arms, its mood could mar,
All as it swelled 'twixt each loud trumpet-change,
That clangs to Britain victory, to Portugal revenge !

II.

Yes! such a strain, with all-o'erpowering measure,
Might melodize with each tumultuous sound,
Each voice of fear or triumph, woe or pleasure,
That rings Mondego's ravaged shores around ;
The thundering cry of hosts with conquest crowned,
The female shriek, the ruined peasant's moan,
The shout of captives from their chains unbound,
The foiled oppressor's deep and sullen groan,
A Nation's choral hymn for tyranny o'erthrown.

III.

But we, weak minstrels of a laggard day,
Skilled but to imitate an elder page,

Timid and raptureless, can we repay
 The debt thou claim'st in this exhausted age?
 Thou givest our lyres a theme, that might engage
 Those that could send thy name o'er sea and land,
 While sea and land shall last; for Homer's rage
 A theme; a theme for Milton's mighty hand—
 How much unmeet for us, a faint degenerate band!

IV.

Ye mountains stern! within whose rugged breast
 The friends of Scottish freedom found repose;
 Ye torrents! whose hoarse sounds have soothed their
 rest,
 Returning from the field of vanquished foes;
 Say, have ye lost each wild majestic close,
 That erst the choir of Bards or Druids flung;
 What time their hymn of victory arose,
 And Cattræth's glens with voice of triumph rung,
 And mystic Merlin harped, and gray-haired Llywarch sung.*

V.

Oh! if your wilds such minstrelsy retain,
 As sure your changeful gales seem oft to say,
 When sweeping wild and sinking soft again,
 Like trumpet-jubilee, or harp's wild sway,
 If ye can echo such triumphant lay,
 Then lend the note to him has loved you long!
 Who pious gathered each tradition gray,
 That floats your solitary wastes along,
 And with affection vain gave them new voice in song.

VI.

For not till now, how oft soe'er the task
 Of truant verse hath lightened graver care,
 From Muse or Silvan was he wont to ask,

* Much of the ancient poetry, preserved in Wales, refers to events which happened in the Northwest of England and Southwest of Scotland, where the Britons for a long time made a stand against the Saxons. Llywarch, the celebrated bard and monarch, was Prince of Argoon, in Cumberland; and his youthful exploits were performed upon the Border, although in his age he was driven into Powys by the successes of the Anglo-Saxons. As for Merlin Wyllt, or the Savage, his name of Caledonian, and his retreat into the Caledonian wood, appropriates him to Scotland.

In phrase poetic, inspiration fair ;
 Careless he gave his numbers to the air,—
 They came unsought for, if applauses came ;
 Nor for himself prefers he now the prayer ;
 Let but his verse befit a hero's fame,
 Immortal be the verse!—forgot the poet's name.

VII.

Hark, from yon misty cairn their answer tossed :
 “Minstrel! the fame of whose romantic lyre,
 Capricious swelling now, may soon be lost,
 Like the light flickering of a cottage fire ;
 If to such task presumptuous thou aspire,
 Seek not from us the meed to warrior due :
 Age after age has gathered son to sire,
 Since our gray cliffs the din of conflict knew,
 Or, pealing through our vales, victorious bugles blew.

VIII.

“Decayed our old traditionary lore,
 Save where the lingering fays renew their ring,
 By milk-maid seen beneath the hawthorn hoar,
 Or round the marge of Minchmore's haunted spring ;
 Save where their legends gray-haired shepherds sing,
 That now scarce win a listening ear but thine,
 Of feuds obscure, and border ravaging,
 And rugged deeds recount in rugged line,
 Of moonlight foray made on Teviot, Tweed, or Tyne.

IX.

“No! search romantic lands, where the near Sun
 Gives with unstinted boon ethereal flame,
 Where the rude villager, his labor done,
 In verse spontaneous† chants some favored name ;
 Whether Olalia's charms his tribute claim,
 Her eye of diamond, and her locks of jet ;
 Or whether, kindling at the deeds of Græme,‡

* A copious fountain upon the ridge of Minchmore, called the Cheeswell, is supposed to be sacred to the fairies, and it was customary to propitiate them by throwing in something upon passing it.

† The flexibility of the Italian and Spanish languages renders these countries distinguished for the talent of improvisation.

‡ The name of Grahame, in England, is usually pronounced as a dissyllable.

He sing, to wild Morisco measure set,
 Old Albin's red claymore, green Erin's bayonet!

X.

“Explore those regions, where the flinty crest
 Of wild Nevada ever gleams with snows,
 Where in the proud Alhambra's ruined breast
 Barbaric monuments of pomp repose;
 Or where the banners of more ruthless foes
 Than the fierce Moor, float o'er Toledo's fane,
 From whose tall towers even now the patriot throws
 An anxious glance, to spy upon the plain
 The blended ranks of England, Portugal, and Spain.

XI.

“There, of Numantian fire a swarthy spark
 Still lightens in the sunburnt native's eye;
 The stately port, slow step, and visage dark,
 Still mark enduring pride and constancy.
 And, if the glow of feudal chivalry
 Beam not, as once, thy nobles' dearest pride,
 Iberia! oft thy crestless peasantry
 Have seen the plumed Hidalgo quit their side,
 Have seen, yet dauntless stood—'gainst fortune fought and
 died.

XII.

“And cherished still by that unchanging race,
 Are themes for minstrelsy more high than thine;
 Of strange tradition many a mystic trace,
 Legend and vision, prophecy and sign;
 Where wonders wild of Arabesque combine
 With Gothic imagery of darker shade,
 Forming a model meet for minstrel line.
 Go, seek such theme!” the Mountain Spirit said:
 With filial awe I heard—I heard, and I obeyed.

THE VISION.

I.

REARING their crests amid the cloudless skies,
 And darkly clustering in the pale moonlight,
 Toledo's holy towers and spires arise,
 As from a trembling lake of silver white ;
 Their mingled shadows intercept the sight
 Of the broad burial-ground outstretched below,
 And naught disturbs the silence of the night ;
 All sleeps in sullen shade, or silver glow,
 All save the heavy swell of Teio's ceaseless flow.

II.

All save the rushing swell of Teio's tide,
 Or, distant heard, a courser's neigh or tramp ;
 Their changing rounds as watchful horsemen ride,
 To guard the limits of King Roderick's camp,
 For, through the river's night-fog rolling damp,
 Was many a proud pavilion dimly seen,
 Which glimmered back, against the moon's fair lamp,
 Tissues of silk and silver twisted sheen,
 And standards proudly pitched, and warders armed between.

III.

But of their Monarch's person keeping ward,
 Since last the deep-mouthed bell of vespers tolled,
 The chosen soldiers of the royal guard
 Their post beneath the proud Cathedral hold :
 A band unlike their Gothic sires of old,
 Who, for the cap of steel and iron mace,
 Bear slender darts, and casques bedecked with gold,
 While silver-studded belts their shoulders grace,
 Where ivory quivers ring in the broad falchion's place.

IV.

In the light language of an idle court,
 They murmured at their master's long delay,

And held his lengthened orisons in sport:

“What! will Don Roderick here till morning stay
To wear in shrift and prayer the night away?

And are his hours in such dull penance past
For fair Florinda’s plundered charms to pay?”*

Then to the east their weary eyes they cast,
And wished the lingering dawn would glimmer forth at last.

V.

But, far within, Toledo’s Prelate lent

An ear of fearful wonder to the King;

The silver lamp a fitful lustre sent,

So long that sad confession witnessing:

For Roderick told of many a hidden thing,

Such as are lothly uttered to the air,

When Fear, Remorse, and Shame the bosom wring,

And Guilt his secret burden cannot bear,

And Conscience seeks in speech a respite from Despair.

VI.

Full on the Prelate’s face, and silver hair,

The stream of failing light was feebly rolled;

But Roderick’s visage, though his head was bare,

Was shadowed by his hand and mantle’s fold.

While of his hidden soul the sins he told,

Proud Alaric’s descendant could not brook,

That mortal man his bearing should behold,

Or boast that he had seen, when Conscience shook,

Fear tame a monarch’s brow, Remorse a warrior’s look.

VII.

The old man’s faded cheek waxed yet more pale,

As many a secret sad the king bewrayed;

And sign and glance eked out the unfinished tale,

When in the midst his faltering whisper staid.

* The invasion of the Moors is generally attributed to the forcible violation committed by Roderick upon Florinda, called by the Moors *Caba*, or *Cava*, the daughter of Count Julian. In his indignation, Julian formed an alliance with the Moors, and countenanced the invasion of Spain by a body of Saracens and Africans, commanded by the celebrated Tarik; the issue of which was the defeat and death of Roderick, and the occupation of almost the whole peninsula by the enemy.

“Thus royal Witiza* was slain,”—he said;

“Yet, holy father, deem not it was I.”—

Thus still Ambition strives her crimes to shade.—

“O rather deem ’twas stern necessity!

Self-preservation bade, and I must kill or die.

VIII.

“And, if Florinda’s shrieks alarmed the air,

If she invoked her absent sire in vain,

And on her knees implored that I would spare,

Yet, reverend priest, thy sentence rash refrain!—

All is not as it seems—the female train

Know by their bearing to disguise their mood:”

But Conscience here, as if in high disdain,

Sent to the Monarch’s cheek the burning blood—

He stayed his speech abrupt—and up the Prelate stood.

IX.

“O hardened offspring of an iron race!

What of thy crimes, Don Roderick, shall I say?

What alms, or prayers, or penance can efface

Murder’s dark spot, wash treason’s stain away!

For the foul ravisher how shall I pray,

Who, scarce repentant, makes his crime his boast?

How hope Almighty vengeance shall delay,

Unless, in mercy to yon Christian host,

He spare the shepherd, lest the guiltless sheep be lost.”—

X.

Then kindled the dark tyrant in his mood,

And to his brow returned its dauntless gloom;

“And welcome then,” he cried, “be blood for blood,

For treason treachery, for dishonor doom!

Yet will I know whence come they, or by whom.

Show, for thou canst—give forth the fated key,

And guide me, Priest, to that mysterious room,

Where, if aught true in old tradition be,

His nation’s future fates a Spanish King shall see.”—

* The predecessor of Roderick upon the Spanish throne, and slain by his connivance, as is affirmed by Rodriguez of Toledo, the father of Spanish history.

XI.

“Ill-fated prince! recall the desperate word,
 Or pause ere yet the omen thou obey!
 Bethink, yon spell-bound portal would afford
 Never to former Monarch entrance-way;
 Nor shall it ever ope, old records say,
 Save to a King, the last of all his line,
 What time his empire totters to decay,
 And treason digs, beneath, her fatal mine,
 And, high above, impends avenging wrath divine.”—

XII.

—“Prelate! a Monarch’s fate brooks no delay!
 Lead on!”—The ponderous key the old man took,
 And held the winking lamp, and led the way
 By winding stair, dark aisle, and secret nook,
 Then on an ancient gateway bent his look;
 And, as the key the desperate King essayed,
 Low muttered thunders the Cathedral shook,
 And twice he stopped, and twice new effort made,
 Till the huge bolts rolled back, and the loud hinges brayed

XIII.

Long, large, and lofty, was that vaulted hall;
 Roof, walls, and floor, were all of marble stone.
 Of polished marble, black as funeral pall,
 Carved o’er with signs and characters unknown.
 A paly light, as of the dawning, shone
 Through the sad bounds, but whence they could not
 spy;
 For window to the upper air was none;
 Yet, by that light, Don Roderick could descry
 Wonders that ne’er till then were seen by mortal eye.

XIV.

Grim sentinels, against the upper wall,
 Of molten bronze, two Statues held their place;
 Massive their naked limbs, their stature tall,
 Their frowning foreheads golden circles grace.
 Moulded they seemed for kings of giant race,
 That lived and sinned before the avenging flood:
 This grasped a scythe, that rested on a mace;

This spread his wings for flight, that pondering stood,
Each stubborn seemed and stern, immutable of mood.

XV.

Fixed was the right-hand Giant's brazen look
Upon his brother's glass of shifting sand,
As if its ebb he measured by a book,
Whose iron volume loaded his huge hand;
In which was wrote of many a falling land,
Of empires lost, and kings to exile driven;
And o'er that pair their names in scroll expand—
"Lo, DESTINY and TIME! to whom by Heaven
The guidance of the earth is for a season given."—

XVI.

Even while they read, the sand-glass wastes away;
And, as the last and lagging grains did creep,
That right-hand Giant 'gan his club upsway,
As one that startles from a heavy sleep.
Full on the upper wall the mace's sweep
At once descended with the force of thunder,
And, hurling down at once, in crumbled heap,
The marble boundary was rent asunder,
And gave to Roderick's view new sights of fear and wonder

XVII.

For they might spy, beyond that mighty breach,
Realms as of Spain in visioned prospect laid,
Castles and towers, in due proportion each,
As by some skilful artist's hand portrayed:
Here, crossed by many a wild Sierra's shade,
And boundless plains that tire the traveller's eye;
There, rich with vineyard and with olive-glade,
Or deep-embrowned by forests huge and high,
Or washed by mighty streams, that slowly murmured by.

XVIII.

And here, as erst upon the antique stage,
Passed forth the bands of maskers trimly led,
In various forms, and various equipage,
While fitting strains the hearer's fancy fed;
So, to sad Roderick's eye in order spread,
Successive pageants filled that mystic scene,

Showing the fate of battles ere they bled,
 And issue of events that had not been ;
 And ever and anon strange sounds were heard between.

XIX.

First shrilled an unrepeatd female shriek !—
 It seemed as if Don Roderick knew the call,
 For the bold blood was blanching in his cheek.—
 Then answered kettle-drum and atabal,
 Gong-peal and cymbal-clank the ear appal,
 The Tecbir war-cry, and the Lelie's yell,*
 Ring wildly dissonant along the hall.

Needs not to Roderick their dread import tell—
 "The Moor!" he cried, "the Moor!—ring out the tocsin bell

XX.

"They come! they come! I see the groaning lands
 White with the turbans of each Arab horde,
 Swart Zaarah joins her misbelieving bands,
 Alla and Mahomet their battle-word,
 The choice they yield, the Koran or the sword.—
 See how the Christians rush to arms amain!—
 In yonder shout the voice of conflict roared ;
 The shadowy hosts are closing on the plain—
 Now, God and St. Iago strike, for the good cause of Spain!"

XXI.

"By heaven, the Moors prevail! the Christians yield!—
 Their coward leader gives for flight the sign!
 The sceptred craven mounts to quit the field—
 Is not yon steed Orelia?—Yes, 'tis mine!†
 But never was she turned from battle-line;—
 Lo! where the recreant spurs o'er stock and stone!
 Curses pursue the slave, and wrath divine!

* The tecbir (derived from the words *Alla acbar*, God is most mighty) was the original war-cry of the Saracens. The *Lelie*, well known to the Christians during the Crusades, is the shout of *Alla illa Alla*, the Mahomedan confession of faith.

† In the battle of Xeres fought by Don Roderick against the Moors, A. D. 714, the Spaniards were defeated with great slaughter, and the king himself was drowned in the Xeres while crossing it in his flight. Orelia, the courser of Don Roderick, was celebrated for her speed and form.

Rivers engulf him!"—"Hush," in shuddering tone,
The Prelate said; "rash Prince, yon visioned form's thine
own."—

XXII.

Just then a torrent crossed the flier's course;
The dangerous ford the Kingly Likeness tried;
But the deep eddies whelmed both man and horse,
Swept like benighted peasant down the tide;
And the proud Moslemah spread far and wide,
As numerous as their native locust band;
Berber and Ismael's sons the spoils divide,
With naked cimeters mete out the land,
And for their bondsmen base the freeborn natives brand.

XXIII.

Then rose the grated Harem, to inclose
The loveliest maidens of the Christian line;
Then, menials to their misbelieving foes,
Castile's young nobles held forbidden wine;
Then, too, the holy Cross, salvation's sign,
By impious hands was from the altar thrown,
And the deep aisles of the polluted shrine
Echoed, for holy hymn and organ tone,
The Santon's frantic dance, the Fakir's gibbering moan.

XXIV.

How fares Don Roderick?—E'en as one who spies
Flames dart their glare o'er midnight's sable woof,
And hears around his children's piercing cries,
And sees the pale assistants stand aloof;
While cruel Conscience brings him bitter proof,
His folly, or his crime, have caused his grief;
And, while above him nods the crumbling roof,
He curses earth and heaven—himself in chief—
Desperate of early aid, despairing heaven's relief!

XXV.

That scythe-armed Giant turned his fatal glass,
And twilight on the landscape closed her wings;
Far to Asturian hills the war-sounds pass,
And in their stead rebeck or timbrel rings;

And to the sound the bell-decked dancer springs,
 Bazars resound as when their marts are met,
 In tourney light the Moor his jerrid flings,
 And on the land as evening seemed to set,
 The Imaum's chant was heard from mosque or minaret.

XXVI.

So passed that pageant. Ere another came,
 The visionary scene was wrapped in smoke,
 Whose sulph'rous wreaths were crossed by sheets of
 flame ;
 With every flash a bolt explosive broke,
 Till Roderick deemed the fiends had burst their yoke.
 And waved 'gainst heaven the infernal gonfalone!
 For War a new and dreadful language spoke,
 Never by ancient warrior heard or known ;
 Lightning and smoke her breath, and thunder was her tone

XXVII.

From the dim landscape roll the clouds away—
 The Christians have regained their heritage ;
 Before the Cross has waned the Crescent's ray,
 And many a monastery decks the stage,
 And lofty church, and low-browed hermitage.
 The land obeys a Hermit and a Knight,—
 The Genii these of Spain for many an age ;
 This clad in sackcloth, that in armor bright,
 And that was VALOR named, this BIGOTRY was hight.

XXVIII.

VALOR was harnessed like a Chief of old,
 Armed at all points, and prompt for knightly gest ;
 His sword was tempered in the Ebro cold,
 Morena's eagle-plume adorned his crest,
 The spoils of Afric's lion bound his breast.
 Fierce he stepped forward and flung down his gage,
 As if of mortal kind to brave the best.
 Him followed his Companion, dark and sage,
 As he, my Master, sung the dangerous Archimage.

XXIX.

Haughty of heart and brow the Warrior came,
 In look and language proud as proud might be,

Vaunting his lordship, lineage, fights, and fame,
 Yet was that bare-foot Monk more proud than he;
 And as the ivy climbs the tallest tree,
 So round the loftiest soul his toils he wound.
 And with his spells subdued the fierce and free,
 Till ermined Age, and Youth in arms renowned,
 Honoring his scourge and hair-cloth, meekly kissed the
 ground.

XXX.

And thus it chanced that VALOR, peerless Knight,
 Who ne'er to King or Kaiser veiled his crest,
 Victorious still in bull-feast, or in fight,
 Since first his limbs with mail he did invest,
 Stooped ever to that Anchoret's behest;
 Nor reasoned of the right nor of the wrong,
 But at his bidding laid the lance in rest,
 And wrought fell deeds the troubled world along,
 For he was fierce as brave, and pitiless as strong.

XXXI.

Oft his proud galleys sought some new-found world,
 That latest sees the sun, or first the morn;
 Still at that Wizard's feet their spoils he hurled,—
 Ingots of ore from rich Potosi borne,
 Crowns by Caciques, aigrettes by Omrahs worn,
 Wrought of rare gems, but broken, rent, and foul;
 Idols of gold from heathen temples torn,
 Bedabbled all with blood.—With grisly scowl
 The Hermit marked the stains, and smiled beneath his cowl.

XXXII.

Then did he bless the offering, and bade make
 Tribute to heaven of gratitude and praise;
 And at his word the choral hymns awake,
 And many a hand the silver censer sways.
 But with the incense-breath these censers raise,
 Mix steams from corpses smouldering in the fire;
 The groans of prisoned victims mar the lays,
 And shrieks of agony confound the quire,
 While, 'mid the mingled sounds, the darkened scenes expire

XXXIII.

Preluding light, were strains of music heard,
 As once again revolved that measured sand;
 Such sounds as when, for silvan dance prepared,
 Gay Xeres summons forth her vintage band;
 When for the light Bolero ready stand
 The Mozo blithe, with gay Muchacha met,*
 He conscious of his broidered cap and band,
 She of her netted locks and light corsette,
 Each tiptoe perched to spring, and shake the castanet.

XXXIV.

And well such strains the opening scene became;
 For VALOR had relaxed his ardent look,
 And at a lady's feet, like lion tame,
 Lay stretched, full loth the weight of arms to brook;
 And softened BIGOTRY, upon his book,
 Pattered a task of little good or ill:
 But the blithe peasant plied his pruning-hook,
 Whistled the muleteer o'er vale and hill,
 And rung from village-green the merry Seguidille.

XXXV.

Gray Royalty, grown impotent of toil,
 Let the grave sceptre slip his lazy hold,
 And careless saw his rule become the spoil
 Of a loose Female and her Minion bold;
 But peace was on the cottage and the fold,
 From court intrigue, from bickering faction far;
 Beneath the chestnut-tree Love's tale was told;
 And to the tinkling of the light guitar,
 Sweet stooped the western sun, sweet rose the evening star.

XXXVI.

As that sea-cloud, in size like human hand
 When first from Carmel by the Tishbite seen,
 Came slowly overshadowing Israel's land,
 Awhile, perchance, bedecked with colors sheen,
 While yet the sunbeams on its skirts had been,

* The Bolero is a very light and active dance, much practised by the Spaniards, in which castanets are always used. *Mozo* and *Muchacha* are equivalent to our phrase of lad and lass.

Limning with purple and with gold its shroud,
 Till darker folds obscured the blue serene,
 And blotted heaven with one broad sable cloud—
 Then sheeted rain burst down, and whirlwinds howled
 aloud;—

XXXVII.

Even so upon that peaceful scene was poured
 Like gathering clouds, full many a foreign band,
 And HE, their Leader, wore in sheath his sword,
 And offered peaceful front and open hand;
 Veiling the perjured treachery he planned,
 By friendship's zeal and honor's specious guise,
 Until he won the passes of the land;
 Then, burst were honor's oath, and friendship's ties!
 He clutched his vulture-grasp, and called fair Spain his prize.

XXXVIII.

An Iron Crown his anxious forehead bore;
 And well such diadem his heart became,
 Who ne'er his purpose for remorse gave o'er,
 Or checked his course for piety or shame;
 Who, trained a soldier, deemed a soldier's fame
 Might flourish in the wreath of battles won,
 Though neither truth nor honor decked his name;
 Who, placed by fortune on a Monarch's throne,
 Recked not of Monarch's faith, or Mercy's kingly tone.

XXXIX.

From a rude isle his ruder lineage came:
 The spark, that, from a suburb hovel's hearth
 Ascending, wraps some capital in flame,
 Hath not a meaner or more sordid birth.
 And for the soul that bade him waste the earth—
 The sable land-flood from some swamp obscure,
 That poisons the glad husband-field with dearth,
 And by destruction bids its fame endure,
 Hath not a source more sullen, stagnant, and impure.

XL.

Before that Leader strode a shadowy Form:
 Her limbs like mist, her torch like meteor showed,

With which she beckoned him through fight and storm,
 And all he crushed that crossed his desperate road,
 Nor thought, nor feared, nor looked on what he trode;
 Realms could not glut his pride, blood could not
 slake,

So oft as e'er she shook her torch abroad—

It was AMBITION bade his terrors wake,
 Nor deigned she, as of yore, a milder form to take.

XLI.

No longer now she spurned at mean revenge,
 Or stayed her hand for conquered foeman's moan,
 As when, the fates of aged Rome to change,

By Cæsar's side she crossed the Rubicon;
 Nor joyed she to bestow the spoils she won,
 As when the banded powers of Greece were tasked
 To war beneath the Youth of Macedon:

No seemly veil her modern minion asked,
 He saw her hideous face, and loved the fiend unmasked.

XLII.

That Prelate marked his march—On banners blazed
 With battles won in many a distant land,

On eagle-standards, and on arms he gazed;
 "And hopest thou, then," he said, "thy power
 shall stand?"

Oh, thou hast builded on the shifting sand,
 And thou hast tempered it with slaughter's flood;
 And know, fell scourge in the Almighty's hand!

Gore-moistened trees shall perish in the bud,
 And, by a bloody death, shall die the Man of Blood!"

XLIII.

The ruthless Leader beckoned from his train
 A wan fraternal Shade, and bade him kneel,
 And paled his temple with the crown of Spain,
 While trumpets rang, and heralds cried, "Castile!"*
 Not that he loved him—No!—in no man's weal,
 Scarce in his own, e'er joyed that sullen heart;
 Yet round that throne he bade his warriors wheel,

* The heralds, at the coronation of a Spanish monarch, proclaim his name three times, and repeat three times the word *Castilla, Castilla, Castilla!*

That the poor puppet might perform his part,
And be a sceptred slave, at his stern beck to start.

XLIV.

But on the Natives of that Land misused,
Not long the silence of amazement hung,
Nor brooked they long their friendly faith abused ;
For, with a common shriek, the general tongue
Exclaimed, "To arms !" and fast to arms they sprung.
And VALOR woke, that Genius of the land !
Pleasure, and ease, and sloth, aside he flung,
As burst the awakening Nazarite his band,
When 'gainst his treacherous foes he clenched his dreadful
hand.

XLV.

That mimic Monarch now cast anxious eye
Upon the Satraps that begirt him round,
Now doffed his royal robe in act to fly,
And from his brow the diadem unbound.
So oft, so near, the Patriot bugle wound,
From Tarik's walls to Bilboa's mountains blown,
These martial satellites hard labor found,
To guard awhile his substituted throne—
Light recking of his cause, but battling for their own.

XLVI.

From Alpuhara's peak that bugle rung,
And it was echoed from Corunna's wall ;
Stately Seville responsive war-shout flung,
Granada caught it in her Moorish hall ;
Galicia bade her children fight or fall,
Wild Biscay shook his mountain-coronet,
Valencia roused her at the battle-call,
And, foremost still where Valor's sons are met,
Fast started to his gun each fiery Miquelet.

XLVII.

But unappalled, and burning for the fight,
The Invaders march, of victory secure ;
Skilful their force to sever or unite,
And trained alike to vanquish or endure.
Nor skilful less, cheap conquest to insure,

Discord to breathe, and jealousy to sow,
 To quell by boasting, and by bribes to lure;
 While naught against them bring the unpractised foe,
 Save hearts for freedom's cause, and hands for freedom's
 blow.

XLVIII.

Proudly they march—but oh! they march not forth
 By one hot field to crown a brief campaign,
 As when their Eagles, sweeping through the North,
 Destroyed at every stoop an ancient reign!
 Far other fate had Heaven decreed for Spain:
 In vain the steel, in vain the torch was plied,
 New Patriot armies started from the slain;
 High blazed the war, and long, and far, and wide,
 And oft the God of Battles blessed the righteous side.

XLIX.

Nor unatoned, where Freedom's foes prevail,
 Remained their savage waste. With blade and brand,
 By day the Invaders ravaged hill and dale,
 But, with the darkness, the Guerilla band
 Came like night's tempest, and avenged the land,
 And claimed for blood the retribution due,
 Probed the hard heart, and lopped the murderous hand;
 And Dawn, when o'er the scene her beams she threw,
 'Midst ruins they had made the spoilers' corpses knew.

L.

What Minstrel verse may sing, or tongue may tell,
 Amid the visioned strife from sea to sea,
 How oft the Patriot banners rose or fell,
 Still honored in defeat as victory!
 For that sad pageant of events to be,
 Showed every form of fight by field and flood;
 Slaughter and Ruin, shouting forth their glee,
 Beheld, while riding on the tempest-scud,
 The waters choked with slain, the earth bedrenched with
 blood!

LI.

Then Zaragoza—blighted be the tongue
 That names thy name without the honor due!

For never hath the harp of minstrel rung,
 Of faith so felly proved, so firmly true!
 Mine, sap, and bomb, thy shattered ruins knew,
 Each art of war's extremity had room,
 Twice from thy half-sacked streets the foe withdrew,
 And when at length stern Fate decreed thy doom,
 They won not Zaragoza, but her children's bloody tomb.*

LII.

Yet raise thy head, sad city! Though in chains,
 Enthralled thou canst not be! Arise, and claim
 Reverence from every heart where Freedom reigns,
 For what thou worshippest!—thy sainted Dame,
 She of the Column, honored be her name,
 By all, whate'er their creed, who honor love!
 And like the sacred relics of the flame,
 That gave some martyr to the blest above,
 To every loyal heart may thy sad embers prove!

LIII.

Nor thine alone such wreck. Gerona fair!
 Faithful to death thy heroes should be sung,
 Manning the towers while o'er their heads the air
 Swart as the smoke from raging furnace hung;
 Now thicker darkening where the mine was sprung,
 Now briefly lightened by the cannon's flare,
 Now arched with fire-sparks as the bomb was flung,
 And reddening now with conflagration's glare,
 While by the fatal light the foes for storm prepare.

LIV.

While all around was danger, strife, and fear,
 While the earth shook, and darkened was the sky,
 And wide Destruction stunned the listening ear,
 Appalled the heart, and stupefied the eye,—
 Afar was heard that thrice-repeated cry,
 In which old Albion's heart and tongue unite,
 Whene'er her soul is up and pulse beats high,

* The interesting account of Mr. Vaughan has made most readers acquainted with the first siege of Zaragoza. The last and fatal siege of that gallant and devoted city is detailed with great eloquence and precision in the "Edinburgh Annual Register" for 1809.

Whether it hail the wine-cup or the fight,
And bid each arm be strong, or bid each heart be light.

LV.

Don Roderick turned him as the shout grew loud—
A varied scene the changeful vision showed,
For, where the ocean mingled with the cloud,
A gallant navy stemmed the billows broad.
From mast and stern St. George's symbol flowed,
Blent with the silver cross to Scotland dear;
Mottling the sea their landward barges rowed,
And flashed the sun on bayonet, brand, and spear,
And the wild beach returned the seaman's jovial cheer.

LVI.

It was a dread, yet spirit-stirring sight!
The billows foamed beneath a thousand oars,
Fast as they land the red-cross ranks unite,
Legions on legions brightening all the shores.
Then banners rise, and cannon-signal roars,
Then peals the warlike thunder of the drum,
Thrills the loud fife, the trumpet-flourish pours,
And patriot hopes awake, and doubts are dumb,
For, bold in Freedom's cause, the bands of Ocean come!

LVII.

A various host they came—whose ranks display
Each mode in which the warrior meets the fight,
The deep battalion locks its firm array,
And meditates his aim the marksman light;
Far glance the lines of sabres flashing bright,
Where mounted squadrons shake the echoing mead,
Lacks not artillery breathing flame and night,
Nor the fleet ordnance whirled by rapid steed,
That rivals lightning's flash in ruin and in speed.

LVIII.

A various host—from kindred realms they came,
Brethren in arms, but rivals in renown—
For yon fair bands shall merry England claim,
And with their deeds of valor deck her crown.
Hers their bold port, and hers their martial frown,

And hers their scorn of death in freedom's cause,
 Their eyes of azure, and their locks of brown,
 And the blunt speech that bursts without a pause,
 And freeborn thoughts, which league the Soldier with the
 Laws.

LIX.

And O! loved warriors of the Minstrel's land!
 Yonder your bonnets nod, your tartans wave!
 The rugged form may mark the mountain band,
 And harsher features, and a mien more grave;
 But ne'er in battle-field throbb'd heart so brave
 As that which beats beneath the Scottish plaid,
 And when the pibroch bids the battle rave,
 And level for the charge your arms are laid,
 Where lives the desperate foe, that for such onset staid

LX.

Hark! from yon stately ranks what laughter rings,
 Mingling wild mirth with war's stern minstrelsy,
 His jest while each blithe comrade round him flings,
 And moves to death with military glee:
 Boast, Erin, boast them! tameless, frank, and free,
 In kindness warm, and fierce in danger known,
 Rough Nature's children, humorous as she:
 And HE, yon Chieftain—strike the proudest tone
 Of thy bold harp, green Isle!—the Hero is thine own.

LXI.

Now on the scene Vimeira should be shown,
 On Talavera's fight should Roderick gaze,
 And hear Corunna wail her battle won,
 And see Busaco's crest with lightning blaze:—
 But shall fond fable mix with heroes' praise?
 Hath Fiction's stage for Truth's long triumphs
 room?
 And dare her wild-flowers mingle with the bays,
 That claim a long eternity to bloom
 Around the warrior's crest, and o'er the warrior's tomb!

LXII.

Or may I give adventurous Fancy scope,
 And stretch a bold hand to the awful veil

That hides futurity from anxious hope,
 Bidding beyond it scenes of glory hail,
 And painting Europe rousing at the tale
 Of Spain's invaders from her confines hurled,
 While kindling Nations buckle on their mail,
 And Fame, with clarion-blast and wings unfurled,
 To Freedom and Revenge awakes an injured World.

LXIII.

O vain, though anxious, is the glance I cast,
 Since Fate has marked futurity her own:—
 Yet Fate resigns to Worth the glorious past,
 The deeds recorded and the laurels won.
 Then, though the Vault of Destiny be gone,
 King, Prelate, all the phantasms of my brain,
 Melted away like mist-wreaths in the sun,
 Yet grant for faith, for valor, and for Spain,
 One note of pride and fire, a Patriot's parting strain.

 CONCLUSION.

I.

“Who shall command Estrella's mountain-tide
 Back to the source, when tempest-chafed, to hie?
 Who, when Gascogne's vexed gulf is raging wide,
 Shall hush it as a nurse her infant's cry?
 His magic power let such vain boaster try,
 And when the torrent shall his voice obey,
 And Biscay's whirlwinds list his lullaby,
 Let him stand forth and bar mine eagles' way,
 And they shall heed his voice, and at his bidding stay.

II.

“Else, ne'er to stoop, till high on Lisbon's towers
 They close their wings, the symbol of our yoke,
 And their own sea hath whelmed yon red-cross
 Power!”—

Thus, on the summit of Alverca's rock,
 To Marshal, Duke, and Peer, Gaul's leader spoke.

While downward on the land his legions press,
 Before them it was rich with vine and flock,
 And smiled like Eden in her summer dress;—
 Behind their wasteful march, a reeking wilderness.*

III.

And shall the boastful Chief maintain his word,
 Though Heaven hath heard the wailings of the land,
 Though Lusitania whet her vengeful sword,
 Though Britons arm, and WELLINGTON command!
 No: grim Busaco's iron ridge shall stand
 An adamantine barrier to his force!
 And from its base shall wheel his shattered band,
 As from the unshaken rock the torrent hoarse
 Bears off its broken waves, and seeks a devious course.

IV.

Yet not because Alcoba's mountain-hawk
 Hath on his best and bravest made her food,
 In numbers confident, yon Chief shall baulk
 His Lord's imperial thirst for spoil and blood:
 For full in view the promised conquest stood,
 And Lisbon's matrons, from their walls, might sum
 The myriads that had half the world subdued,
 And hear the distant thunders of the drum,
 That bids the band of France to storm and havoc come.

V.

Four moons have heard these thunders idly rolled,
 Have seen these wistful myriads eye their prey,
 As famished wolves survey a guarded fold—
 But in the middle path a Lion lay!
 At length they move—but not to battle-fray,
 Nor blaze yon fires where meets the manly fight;
 Beacons of infamy, they light the way
 Where cowardice and cruelty unite,
 To damn with double shame their ignominious flight!

* I have ventured to apply to the movements of the French army that sublime passage in the prophecies of Joel, chap. ii. 3. "A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness, yea, and nothing shall escape them."

VI.

O triumph for the Fiends of Lust and wrath!
 Ne'er to be told, yet ne'er to be forgot,
 What wanton horrors marked their wrackful path!
 The peasant butchered in his ruined cot,
 The hoary priest even at the altar shot,
 Childhood and age given o'er to sword and flame,
 Woman to infamy; no crime forgot,
 By which inventive demons might proclaim
 Immortal hate to Man, and scorn of God's great name!

VII.

The rudest sentinel, in Britain born,
 With horror paused to view the havoc done,
 Gave his poor crust to feed some wretch forlorn,*
 Wiped his stern eye, then fiercer grasped his gun.
 Nor with less zeal shall Britain's peaceful son
 Exult the debt of sympathy to pay;
 Riches nor poverty the tax shall shun,
 Nor prince nor peer, the wealthy nor the gay,
 Nor the poor peasant's mite, nor bard's more worthless lay.

VIII.

But thou—unfoughten wilt thou yield to Fate,
 Minion of Fortune, now miscalled in vain!
 Can vantage-ground no confidence create,
 Marcella's pass, nor Guarda's mountain chain?
 Vain-glorious Fugitive! yet turn again!
 Behold, where, named by some Prophetic Seer,
 Flows Honor's Fountain,† as foredoomed the stain
 From thy dishonored name and arms to clear—
 Fallen Child of Fortune, turn, redeem her favor here!‡

IX.

Yet, ere thou turn'st, collect each distant aid:
 Those chiefs that never heard the Lion roar!
 Within whose souls lives not a trace portrayed,

* Even the unexampled gallantry of the British army in the campaign of 1810-11, although they never fought but to conquer, will do them less honor in history than their humanity to the famished Spaniards, whom they fed as well as defended, even when they were themselves reduced to short allowance.

† The literal translation of *Fuentes d'Honoro*.

‡ Massena, frequently called the Spoil Child of Victory.

Of Talavera, or Mondego's shore!
 Marshal each band thou hast, and summon more;
 Of war's fell stratagems exhaust the whole;
 Rank upon rank, squadron on squadron pour,
 Legion on legion on thy foeman roll,
 And weary out his arm—thou canst not quell his soul.

X.

O vainly gleams with steel Agueda's shore,
 Vainly thy squadrons hide Assuava's plain,
 And front the flying thunders as they roar,
 With frantic charge and tenfold odds, in vain!
 And what avails thee that, for Cameron slain,
 Wild from his plaided ranks the yell was given—
 Vengeance and grief gave mountain rage the rein,
 And, at the bloody spear-point headlong driven,
 Thy Despot's giant guards fled like the rack of heaven.

XI.

Go, baffled Boaster! teach thy haughty mood
 To plead at thine imperious master's throne!
 Say, thou hast left his legions in their blood,
 Deceived his hopes, and frustrated thine own;
 Say, that thine utmost skill and valor shown
 By British skill and valor were outvied;
 Last say, thy conqueror was WELLINGTON!
 And if he chafe, be his own fortune tried—
 God and our cause to friend, the venture we'll abide.

XII.

But ye, the heroes of that well-fought day,
 How shall a bard, unknowing and unknown,
 His meed to each victorious leader pay,
 Or bind on every brow the laurels won?
 Yet fain my harp would wake its boldest tone,
 O'er the wide sea to hail CADOGAN brave,
 And he, perchance, the minstrel note might own,

* The gallant Colonel Cameron was wounded mortally during the desperate contest in the streets of the village called Fuentes d'Honoro. He fell at the head of his native Highlanders, the 71st and 79th, who raised a dreadful shriek of grief and rage. They charged, with irresistible fury, the finest body of French grenadiers ever seen, being a part of Bonaparte's selected guard, and bore them out of the contested ground at the point of the bayonet.

Mindful of meeting brief that Fortune gave
 'Mid yon far western isles, that hear the Atlantic rave.

XIII.

Yes! hard the task, when Britons wield the sword,
 To give each Chief and every field its fame:
 Hark! Albuera thunders BERESFORD,
 And red Barossa shouts for dauntless GRÆME.
 O for a verse of tumult and of flame,
 Bold as the bursting of their cannon sound,
 To bid the world re-echo to their fame!
 For, never, upon gory battle-ground,
 With conquest's well-bought wreath were braver victors
 crowned!

XIV.

O who shall grudge him Albuera's bays,
 Who brought a race regenerate to the field,
 Roused them to emulate their fathers' praise,
 Tempered their headlong rage, their courage steeled,*
 And raised fair Lusitania's fallen shield,
 And gave new edge to Lusitania's sword,
 And taught her sons forgotten arms to wield—
 Shivered my harp, and burst its every chord,
 If it forget thy worth, victorious BERESFORD!

XV.

Not on that bloody field of battle won,
 Though Gaul's proud legions rolled like mist away,
 Was half his self-devoted valor shown,—
 He gaged but life on that illustrious day;
 But when he toiled those squadrons to array,
 Who fought like Britons in the bloody game,
 Sharper than Polish pike or assagay,
 He braved the shafts of censure and of shame,
 And, dearer far than life, he pledged a soldier's fame.

* Field-Marshal Beresford was contented to undertake all the hazard of obloquy which might have been founded upon any miscarriage in the highly important experiment of training the Portuguese troops to an improved state of discipline. His generous devotedness was amply rewarded by the conduct and valor of the soldiers during the whole course of the war.

XVI.

Nor be his praise o'erpassed who strove to hide
 Beneath the warrior's vest affection's wound,
 Whose wish, heaven for his country's weal denied;
 Danger and fate he sought, but glory found.
 From clime to clime, where'er war's trumpets sound,
 The wanderer went; yet, Caledonia! still
 Thine was his thought in march and tented ground;
 He dreamed 'mid Alpine cliffs of Athole's hill,
 And heard in Ebro's roar his Lyndoch's lovely rill.

XVII.

O hero of a race renowned of old,
 Whose war-cry oft has waked the battle-swell,*
 Since first distinguished in the onset bold,
 Wild sounding when the Roman rampart fell!
 By Wallace' side it rung the Southron's knell,
 Alderne, Kilsythe, and Tibber owned its fame,
 Tummell's rude pass can of its terrors tell,
 But ne'er from prouder field arose the name,
 Than when wild Ronda learned the conquering shout of
 GRÆME!

XVIII.

But all too long, through seas unknown and dark,
 (With Spenser's parable I close my tale,)
 By shoal and rock hath steered my venturous bark,
 And landward now I drive before the gale;
 And now the blue and distant shore I hail,
 And nearer now I see the port expand,
 And now I gladly furl my weary sail,
 And, as the prow light touches on the strand,
 I strike my red-cross flag, and bind my skiff to land.

* This stanza alludes to the various achievements of the warlike family of Græme, or Grahame. They are said to have descended from the Scottish chief, under whose command his countrymen stormed the wall built by the Emperor Severus. Sir John the Grahame, "the hardy wight and wise," is well known as the friend of Sir William Wallace. Alderne, Kilsyth, and Tibbermuir, were scenes of the victories of the heroic Marquis of Montrose. The pass of Killy-crankie is famous for the action between King William's forces and the Highlanders in 1689,

"Where glad Dundee in faint huzzas expired."

ROKBY;

A POEM, IN SIX CANTOS.

TO

JOHN R. S. MORRITT, ESQ.,

This Poem,

THE SCENE OF WHICH IS LAID IN HIS BEAUTIFUL DEMESNE OF ROKEBY,

IS INSCRIBED,

IN TOKEN OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP,

BY

WALTER SCOTT.

Dec. 31, 1812.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE scene of this Poem is laid at Rokeby, near Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire, and shifts to the adjacent fortress of Barnard Castle, and to other places in that vicinity.

The time occupied by the action is a space of five days, three of which are supposed to elapse between the end of the Fifth and beginning of the Sixth Canto.

The date of the supposed events is immediately subsequent to the great battle of Marston Moor, 3d July, 1644. This period of public confusion has been chosen, without any purpose of combining the Fable with the Military or Political Events of the Civil War, but only as affording a degree of probability to the fictitious narrative now presented to the public.

ROKEBY.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE Moon is in her summer glow,
But hoarse and high the breezes blow,
And, racking o'er her face, the cloud
Varies the tincture of her shroud ;
On Barnard's towers, and Tees's stream,*
She changes as a guilty dream,
When Conscience, with remorse and fear,
Goads sleeping Fancy's wild career.
Her light seems now the blush of shame,
Seems now fierce anger's darker flame,
Shifting that shade, to come and go,
Like apprehension's hurried glow ;
Then sorrow's livery dims the air,
And dies in darkness, like despair.
Such varied hues the warder sees
Reflected from the woodland Tees,
Then from old Baliol's tower looks forth,
Sees the clouds mustering in the north,
Hears, upon turret-roof and wall,
By fits the plashing rain-drop fall,

* The once magnificent fortress of Barnard Castle derives its name from its founder, Barnard Baliol, the ancestor of the short and unfortunate dynasty of that name, which succeeded to the Scottish throne under the patronage of Edward I. and Edward III. Baliol's Tower, afterwards mentioned in the poem, is a round tower of great size, situated at the western extremity of the building. The prospect from the top of the Tower commands a rich and magnificent view of the wooded valley of the Tees.

Lists to the breeze's boding sound,
And wraps his shaggy mantle round.

II.

Those towers, which in the changeful gleam
Throw murky shadows on the stream,
Those towers of Barnard hold a guest,
The emotions of whose troubled breast,
In wild and strange confusion driven,
Rival the flitting rack of heaven.
Ere sleep stern OSWALD'S senses tied,
Oft had he changed his weary side,
Composed his limbs and vainly sought
By effort strong to banish thought.
Sleep came at length, but with a train
Of feelings true and fancies vain,
Mingling, in wild disorder cast,
The expected future with the past.
Conscience, anticipating time,
Already rues the enacted crime,
And calls her furies forth, to shake
The sounding scourge and hissing snake;
While her poor victim's outward throes
Bear witness to his mental woes,
And show what lesson may be read
Beside a sinner's restless bed.

III.

Thus Oswald's laboring feelings trace
Strange changes in his sleeping face,
Rapid and ominous as these
With which the moonbeams tinge the Tees.
There might be seen of shame the blush,
There anger's dark and fiercer flush,
While the perturbed sleeper's hand
Seemed grasping dagger-knife or brand.
Relaxed that grasp, the heavy sigh,
The tear in the half-opening eye,
The pallid cheek and brow confessed
That grief was busy in his breast;
Nor paused that mood—a sudden start
Impelled the life-blood from the heart:
Features convulsed, and mutterings dread,

Show terror reigns in sorrow's stead.
That pang the painful slumber broke,
And Oswald with a start awoke.

IV.

He woke, and feared again to close
His eyelids in such dire repose ;
He woke,—to watch the lamp, and tell
From hour to hour the castle-bell,
Or listen to the owlet's cry,
Or the sad breeze that whistles by,
Or catch, by fits, the tuneless rhyme
With which the warder cheats the time,
And envying think, how, when the sun
Bids the poor soldier's watch be done,
Couched on his straw, and fancy-free,
He sleeps like careless infancy.

V.

Far town-ward sounds a distant tread,
And Oswald, starting from his bed,
Hath caught it, though no human ear,
Unsharpened by revenge and fear,
Could e'er distinguish horse's clank,
Until it reached the castle bank.
Now nigh and plain the sound appears,
The warder's challenge now he hears,
Then clanking chains and levers tell,
That o'er the moat the drawbridge fell ;
And, in the castle court below,
Voices are heard, and torches glow,
As marshalling the stranger's way,
Straight for the room where Oswald lay ;
The cry was,—“ Tidings from the host,
Of weight—a messenger comes post.”
Stiffing the tumult of his breast,
His answer Oswald thus expressed—
“ Bring food and wine, and trim the fire ;
Admit the stranger, and retire.”

VI.

The stranger came with heavy stride,
The morion's plumes his visage hide,

And the buff-coat, an ample fold,
 Mantles his form's gigantic mould.*
 Full slender answer deigned he
 To Oswald's anxious courtesy,
 But marked, by a disdainful smile,
 He saw and scorned the petty wile,
 When Oswald changed the torch's place,
 Anxious that on the soldier's face
 Its partial lustre might be thrown,
 To show his looks, yet hide his own.
 His guest, the while, laid low aside
 The pond'rous cloak of tough bull's hide,
 And to the torch glanced broad and clear
 The corslet of a cuirassier ;
 Then from his brow the casque he drew,
 And from the dank plume dashed the dew,
 From gloves of mail relieved his hands,
 And spread them to the kindling brands,
 And, turning to the genial board,
 Without a health, or pledge, or word
 Of meet and social reverence said,
 Deeply he drank, and fiercely fed ;
 As free from ceremony's sway,
 As famished wolf that tears its prey.

VII.

With deep impatience, tinged with fear,
 His host beheld him gorge his cheer,
 And quaff the full carouse, that lent
 His brow a fiercer hardiment.
 Now Oswald stood a space aside,
 Now paced the room with hasty stride,
 In feverish agony to learn
 Tidings of deep and dread concern,
 Cursing each moment that his guest
 Protracted o'er his ruffian feast.
 Yet viewing with alarm, at last,
 The end of that uncouth repast,
 Almost he seemed their haste to rue,

* The use of complete suits of armor was fallen into disuse during the Civil War, though they were still worn by leaders of rank and importance. Buff-coats continued to be worn by the city-trained bands till near the middle of the last century.

As, at his sign, his train withdrew,
 And left him with the stranger, free
 To question of his mystery.
 Then did his silence long proclaim
 A struggle between fear and shame.

VIII.

Much in the stranger's mien appears
 To justify suspicious fears.
 On his dark face a scorching clime,
 And toil, had done the work of time,
 Roughened the brow, the temples bared,
 And sable hairs with silver shared,
 Yet left—what age alone could tame—
 The lip of pride, the eye of flame;
 The full-drawn lip that upward curled,
 The eye, that seemed to scorn the world.
 That lip had terror never blenched;
 Ne'er in that eye hath tear-drop quenched
 The flash severe of swarthy glow,
 That mocked at pain, and knew not woe.
 Inured to danger's direst form,
 Tornade and earthquake, flood and storm,
 Death had he seen by sudden blow,
 By wasting plague, by tortures slow,*
 By mine or breach, by steel or ball,
 Knew all his shapes, and scorned them all.

IX.

But yet, though BERTRAM'S hardened look
 Unmoved could blood and danger brook,
 Still worse than apathy had place
 On his swart brow and callous face;
 For evil passions, cherished long,
 Had ploughed them with impression strong.
 All that gives gloss to sin, all gay

* The successes of the English in the predatory incursions upon Spanish America, during the reign of Elizabeth, had never been forgotten; and, from that period downward, the exploits of Drake and Raleigh were imitated, upon a smaller scale indeed, but with equally desperate valor, by small bands of pirates, gathered from all nations, but chiefly French and English. The character of Bertram is copied from those qualities by which the bucaniers were generally distinguished.

Light folly, past with youth away,
 But rooted stood, in manhood's hour,
 The weeds of vice without their flower.
 And yet the soil in which they grew,
 Had it been tamed when life was new,
 Had depth and vigor to bring forth
 The hardier fruits of virtuous worth.
 Not that, e'en then, his heart had known
 The gentler feelings' kindly tone;
 But lavish waste had been refined
 To bounty in his chastened mind,
 And lust of gold, that waste to feed,
 Been lost in love of glory's meed,
 And, frantic then no more, his pride
 Had ta'en fair virtue for its guide.

X.

Even now, by conscience unrestrained,
 Clogged by gross vice, by slaughter stained,
 Still knew his daring soul to soar,
 And mastery o'er the mind he bore;
 For meaner guilt, or heart less hard,
 Quailed beneath Bertram's bold regard.
 And this felt Oswald, while in vain
 He strove, by many a winding train,
 To lure his sullen guest to show,
 Unasked, the news he longed to know,
 While on far other subject hung
 His heart, than faltered from his tongue.
 Yet naught for that his guest did deign
 To note or spare his secret pain,
 But still, in stern and stubborn sort,
 Returned him answer dark and short,
 Or started from the theme, to range
 In loose digression wild and strange,
 And forced the embarrassed host to buy
 By query close, direct reply.

XI.

A while he glozed upon the cause
 Of Commons, Covenant, and Laws,
 And Church Reformed—but felt rebuke
 Beneath grim Bertram's sneering look,

Then stammered—"Has a field been fought?
 Has Bertram news of battle brought?
 For sure a soldier, famed so far
 In foreign fields for feats of war,
 On eve of fight ne'er left the host,
 Until the field were won and lost."

"Here, in your towers by circling Tees,
 You, Oswald Wycliffe, rest at ease;
 Why deem it strange that others come
 To share such safe and easy home,
 From fields where danger, death, and toil,
 Are the reward of civil broil?"—

"Nay, mock not, friend! since well we know
 The near advances of the foe,
 To mar our northern army's work,
 Encamped before beleaguered York;
 Thy horse with valiant Fairfax lay,
 And must have fought—how went the day?"—

XII.

"Wouldst hear the tale?—On Marston heath
 Met, front to front, the ranks of death;
 Flourished the trumpets fierce, and now
 Fired was each eye, and flushed each brow;
 On either side loud clamors ring,
 'God and the Cause!'—'God and the King!'
 Right English all, they rushed to blows,
 With naught to win, and all to lose.
 I could have laughed—but lacked the time—
 To see, in phrenesy sublime,
 How the fierce zealots fought and bled,
 For king or state, as humor led;
 Some for a dream of public good,
 Some for church-tippet, gown and hood,
 Draining their veins, in death to claim
 A patriot's or a martyr's name.—
 Led Bertram Risingham the hearts,
 That countered there on adverse parts,
 No superstitious fool had I
 Sought El Dorados in the sky!
 Chili had heard me through her states,
 And Lima oped her silver gates,
 Rich Mexico I had marched through,

And sacked the splendors of Peru,
 Till sunk Pizarro's daring name,
 And, Cortez, thine, in Bertram's fame."—
 "Still from the purpose wilt thou stray!
 Good gentle friend, how went the day?"

XIII.

"Good am I deemed at trumpet-sound,
 And good where goblets dance the round,
 Though gentle ne'er was joined, till now,
 With rugged Bertram's breast and brow.—
 But I resume. The battle's rage
 Was like the strife which currents wage
 Where Orinoco, in his pride,
 Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
 But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
 A rival sea of roaring war;
 While, in ten thousand eddies driven,
 The billows fling their foam to heaven,
 And the pale pilot seeks in vain,
 Where rolls the river, where the main.
 Even thus upon the bloody field,
 The eddying tides of conflict wheeled
 Ambiguous, till that heart of flame,
 Hot Rupert, on our squadrons came,
 Hurling against our spears a line
 Of gallants fiery as their wine;
 Then ours, though stubborn in their zeal,
 In zeal's despite began to reel.
 What wouldst thou more?—in tumult tossed,
 Our leaders fell, our ranks were lost.
 A thousand men, who drew the sword
 For both the Houses and the Word,
 Preached forth from hamlet, grange, and down,
 To curb the erosier and the crown,
 Now, stark and stiff, lie stretched in gore,
 And ne'er shall rail at mitre more.—
 Thus fared it, when I left the fight,
 With the good Cause and Commons' right."—

XIV.

"Disastrous news!" dark Wycliffe said;
 Assumed despondence bent his head,

While troubled joy was in his eye,
 The well-feigned sorrow to belie.—
 “Disastrous news!—when needed most,
 Told ye not that your chiefs were lost?
 Complete the woful tale, and say,
 Who fell upon that fatal day;
 What leaders of repute and name
 Bought by their death a deathless fame.
 If such my direst foeman’s doom,
 My tears shall dew his honored tomb.—
 No answer?—Friend, of all our host,
 Thou know’st whom I should hate the most,
 Whom thou too, once, wert wont to hate,
 Yet leav’st me doubtful of his fate.”—
 With look unmoved,—“Of friend or foe,
 Aught,” answered Bertram, “wouldst thou know,
 Demand in simple terms and plain,
 A soldier’s answer shalt thou gain;
 For question dark, or riddle high,
 I have nor judgment nor reply.”

XV.

The wrath his art and fear suppressed,
 Now blazed at once in Wycliffe’s breast;
 And brave, from man so meanly born,
 Roused his hereditary scorn.
 “Wretch! hast thou paid thy bloody debt?
 PHILIP OF MORTHAM, lives he yet?
 False to thy patron, or thine oath,
 Trait’rous or perjured, one or both.
 Slave! hast thou kept thy promise plight,
 To slay thy leader in the fight?”—
 Then from his seat the soldier sprung,
 And Wycliffe’s hand he strongly wrung;
 His grasp, as hard as glove of mail,
 Forced the red blood-drop from the nail—
 “A health!” he cried; and, ere he quaffed,
 Flung from him Wycliffe’s hand, and laughed:
 —“Now, Oswald Wycliffe, speaks thy heart!
 Now play’st thou well thy genuine part!
 Worthy, but for thy craven fear,
 Like me to roam a bucanier.
 What reck’st thou of the Cause divine,

If Mortham's wealth and lands be thine?
 What car'st thou for beleaguered York,
 If this good hand have done its work?
 Or what though Fairfax and his best
 Are reddening Marston's swarthy breast,
 If Philip Mortham with them lie,
 Lending his life-blood to the dye?—
 Sit, then! and as 'mid comrades free
 Carousing after victory,
 When tales are told of blood and fear,
 That boys and women shrink to hear,
 From point to point I frankly tell
 The deed of death as it befell.

XVI.

"When purposed vengeance I forego,
 Term me a wretch, nor deem me foe;
 And when an insult I forgive,
 Then brand me as a slave, and live!—
 Philip of Mortham is with those
 Whom Bertram Risingham calls foes;
 Or whom more sure revenge attends,
 If numbered with ungrateful friends.
 As was his wont, ere battle glowed,
 Along the marshalled ranks he rode,
 And wore his visor up the while.
 I saw his melancholy smile,
 When, full opposed in front, he knew
 Where ROKEBY's kindred banner flew.
 'And thus,' he said, 'will friends divide!—
 I heard, and thought how, side by side,
 We two had turned the battle's tide,
 In many a well-debated field,
 Where Bertram's breast was Philip's shield.
 I thought on Darien's deserts pale,
 Where death bestrides the evening gale,
 How o'er my friend my cloak I threw,
 And fenceless faced the deadly dew;
 I thought on Quariana's cliff,
 Where, rescued from our foundering skiff,
 Through the white breakers' wrath I bore
 Exhausted Mortham to the shore;
 And when his side an arrow found,

I sucked the Indian's venom'd wound.
These thoughts like torrents rushed along,
To sweep away my purpose strong.

XVII.

“Hearts are not flint, and flints are rent;
Hearts are not steel, and steel is bent.
When Mortham bade me, as of yore,
Be near him in the battle's roar,
I scarcely saw the spears laid low,
I scarcely heard the trumpets blow;
Lost was the war in inward strife,
Debating Mortham's death or life.
'Twas then, I thought, how, lured to come,
As partner of his wealth and home,
Years of piratic wand'ring o'er,
With him I sought our native shore.
But Mortham's lord grew far estranged
From the bold heart with whom he ranged;
Doubts, horrors, superstitious fears,
Saddened and dimmed descending years;
The wily priests their victim sought,
And damned each free-born deed and thought.
Then must I seek another home,
My license shook his sober dome;
If gold he gave, in one wild day
I revelled thrice the sum away.
An idle outcast then I strayed,
Unfit for tillage or for trade:
Deemed, like the steel of rusted lance,
Useless and dangerous at once.
The women feared my hardy look,
At my approach the peaceful shook;
The merchant saw my glance of flame,
And locked his hoards when Bertram came;
Each child of coward peace kept far
From the neglected son of war.

XVIII.

“But civil discord gave the call,
And made my trade the trade of all.
By Mortham urged, I came again
His vassals to the fight to train.

What guerdon waited on my care?
 I could not cant of creed or prayer;
 Sour fanatics each trust obtained,
 And I, dishonored and disdained,
 Gained but the high and happy lot,
 In these poor arms to front the shot!—
 All this thou know'st, thy gestures tell;
 Yet hear it o'er, and mark it well.
 'Tis honor bids me now relate
 Each circumstance of Mortham's fate.

XIX.

“Thoughts, from the tongue that slowly part,
 Glance quick as lightning through the heart.
 As my spur pressed my courser's side,
 Philip of Mortham's cause was tried,
 And, ere the charging squadrons mixed,
 His plea was cast, his doom was fixed.
 I watched him through the doubtful fray,
 That changed as March's moody day,
 Till, like a stream that bursts its bank,
 Fierce Rupert thundered on our flank.
 'Twas then, midst tumult, smoke, and strife,
 Where each man fought for death or life,
 'Twas then I fired my petronel,
 And Mortham, steed and rider, fell.
 One dying look he upward cast,
 Of wrath and anguish—'twas his last.
 Think not that there I stopped to view
 What of the battle should ensue;
 But ere I cleared that bloody press,
 Our northern horse ran masterless;
 Monckton and Mitton told the news,*
 How troops of roundheads choked the Ouse,
 And many a bonny Scot, aghast,
 Spurring his palfrey northward, past,
 Cursing the day when zeal or meed
 First lured their Lesley o'er the Tweed.
 Yet when I reached the banks of Swale,
 Had rumor learned another tale;

* Monckton and Mitton are villages near the river Ouse, and not very distant from the field of battle.

With his barbed horse, fresh tidings say,
 Stout Cromwell has redeemed the day;*
 But whether false the news, or true,
 Oswald, I reckon as light as you."

XX.

Not then by Wycliffe might be shown,
 How his pride startled at the tone
 In which his complice, fierce and free,
 Asserted guilt's equality.
 In smoothest terms his speech he wove,
 Of endless friendship, faith, and love;
 Promised and vowed in courteous sort,
 But Bertram broke professions short.
 "Wycliffe, be sure not here I stay,
 No, scarcely till the rising day;
 Warned by the legends of my youth,
 I trust not an associate's truth.
 Do not my native dales prolong
 Of Percy Rede the tragic song,
 Trained forward to his bloody fall,
 By Girsonfield, that treach'rous Hall?†
 Oit, by the Pringle's haunted side,
 The shepherd sees his spectre glide.
 And near the spot that gave me name,
 The moated mound of Risingham,‡
 Where Reed upon her margin sees
 Sweet Woodburne's cottages and trees,

* Cromwell, with his regiment of cuirassiers, had a principal share in turning the fate of the day at Marston Moor.

† According to the border legend, Percival Reed, Esquire, a keeper of Reedsdale, was betrayed by the Halls (hence denominated the false-hearted Ha's) to a band of moss-troopers of the name of Crosier, who slew him at Batinghope, near the source of the Reed. The ghost of the murdered borderer was supposed to haunt the banks of a brook called the Pringle.

‡ Risingham, upon the river Reed, near the beautiful hamlet of Woodburn, is an ancient Roman station, formerly called *Habitancum*. About half a mile distant from Risingham, upon an eminence covered with scattered birch-trees and fragments of rock, there is cut upon a large rock, in *alto relievo*, a remarkable figure, called Robin of Risingham, or Robin of Reedsdale. The popular tradition is, that it represents a giant, whose brother resided at Woodburn, and he himself at Risingham. It adds, that they subsisted by hunting, and that one of them, finding the game become too scarce to support them, poisoned his companion, to whose memory the monument was engraved.

Some ancient sculptor's art has shown
 An outlaw's image on the stone ;
 Unmatched in strength, a giant he,
 With quivered back, and kirtled knee.
 Ask how he died, that hunter bold,
 The tameless monarch of the wold,
 And age and infancy can tell,
 By brother's treachery he fell.
 Thus warned by legends of my youth,
 I trust to no associate's truth.

XXI.

“ When last we reasoned of this deed,
 Naught, I bethink me, was agreed,
 Or by what rule, or when, or where,
 The wealth of Mortham we should share ;
 Then list, while I the portion name,
 Our differing laws give each to claim.
 Thou, vassal sworn to England's throne,
 Her rules of heritage must own ;
 They deal thee, as to nearest heir,
 Thy kinsman's lands and livings fair,
 And these I yield :—do thou revere
 The statutes of the Bucanier.*
 Friend to the sea, and foeman sworn
 To all that on her waves are borne,
 When falls a mate in battle broil,
 His comrade heirs his portioned spoil ;
 When dies in fight a daring foe,
 He claims his wealth who struck the blow ;
 And either rule to me assigns
 Those spoils of Indian seas and mines,
 Hoarded in Mortham's caverns dark ;
 Ingot of gold and diamond spark,

* The “ statutes of the Bucaniers ” were, in reality, more equitable than could have been expected. When the expedition was completed, the fund of prize-money acquired was thrown together, and the owners of the vessel had then their share assigned for the expenses of the outfit. The surgeon's and carpenter's salaries, with the price of provisions and ammunition, were also defrayed. Then followed the compensation due to the maimed and wounded, rated according to the damage they had sustained. After this act of justice and humanity, the remainder of the booty was divided into as many shares as there were Bucaniers.

Chalice and plate from churches borne,
 And gems from shrieking beauty torn,
 Each string of pearl, each silver bar,
 And all the wealth of western war.
 I go to search, where, dark and deep,
 Those Transatlantic treasures sleep.
 Thou must along—for, lacking thee,
 The heir will scarce find entrance free;
 And then farewell. I haste to try
 Each varied pleasure wealth can buy;
 When cloyed each wish, these wars afford
 Fresh work for Bertram's restless sword."

XXII.

An undecided answer hung
 On Oswald's hesitating tongue.
 Despite his craft, he heard with awe
 This ruffian stabber fix the law;
 While his own troubled passions veer
 Through hatred, joy, regret, and fear:—
 Joyed at the soul that Bertram flies,
 He grudged the murderer's mighty prize,
 Hated his pride's presumptuous tone,
 And feared to wend with him alone.
 At length that middle course to steer,
 To cowardice and craft so dear,
 "His charge," he said, "would ill allow
 His absence from the fortress now;
 WILFRID on Bertram should attend,
 His son should journey with his friend."

XXIII.

Contempt kept Bertram's anger down,
 And wreathed to savage smile his frown.
 "Wilfrid, or thou—'tis one to me,
 Whichever bears the golden key.
 Yet think not but I mark, and smile
 To mark, thy poor and selfish wile!
 If injury from me you fear,
 What, Oswald Wycliffe, shields thee here?
 I've sprung from walls more high than these,
 I've swam through deeper streams than Tees.
 Might I not stab thee ere one yell

Could rouse the distant sentinel?
 Start not—it is not my design,
 But, if it were, weak fence were thine;
 And, trust me, that, in time of need,
 This hand hath done more desp'rate deed.
 Go, haste and rouse thy slumb'ring son;
 Time calls, and I must needs be gone."

XXIV.

Naught of his sire's ungenerous part
 Polluted Wilfrid's gentle heart;
 A heart too soft from early life
 To hold with fortune needful strife.
 His sire, while yet a hardier race
 Of numerous sons were Wycliffe's grace,
 On Wilfred set contemptuous brand,
 For feeble heart and forceless hand;
 But a fond mother's care and joy
 Were centred in her sickly boy.
 No touch of childhood's frolic mood
 Showed the elastic spring of blood;
 Hour after hour he loved to pore
 On Shakspeare's rich and varied lore,
 But turned from martial scenes and light,
 From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
 To ponder Jacques' moral strain,
 And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain;
 And weep himself to soft repose
 O'er gentle Desdemona's woes.

XXV.

In youth he sought not pleasures found
 By youth in horse, and hawk, and hound,
 But loved the quiet joys that wake
 By lonely stream and silent lake;
 In Deepdale's solitude to lie,
 Where all is cliff and copse and sky;
 To climb Catcastle's dizzy peak,
 Or lone Pendragon's mound to seek.
 Such was his wont; and there his dream
 Soared on some wild fantastic theme,
 Of faithful love, or ceaseless spring,
 Till Contemplation's wearied wing

The enthusiast could no more sustain,
And sad he sunk to earth again.

XXVI.

He loved—as many a lay can tell,
Preserved in Stanmore's lonely dell;
For his was minstrel's skill, he caught
The art unteachable, untaught:
He loved—his soul did nature frame
For love, and fancy nursed the flame;
Vainly he loved—for seldom swain
Of such soft mould is loved again;
Silent he loved—in every gaze
Was passion, friendship in his phrase.
So mused his life away—till died
His brethren all, their father's pride.
Wilfrid is now the only heir
Of all his stratagems and care,
And destined, darkling, to pursue
Ambition's maze by Oswald's clue.

XXVII.

Wilfrid must love and woo the bright
Matilda, heir of Rokeby's knight.
To love her was an easy hest,
The secret empress of his breast;
To woo her was a harder task
To one that durst not hope or ask.
Yet all Matilda could, she gave
In pity to her gentle slave;
Friendship, esteem, and fair regard,
And praise, the poet's best reward!
She read the tales his taste approved,
And sung the lays he framed or loved;
Yet, loth to nurse the fatal flame
Of hopeless love in friendship's name,
In kind caprice she oft withdrew
The fav'ring glance to friendship due,
Then grieved to see her victim's pain,
And gave the dang'rous smiles again.

XXVIII.

So did the suit of Wilfrid stand,
When war's loud summons waked the land.

Three banners, floating o'er the Tees,
 The woe-foreboding peasant sees ;
 In concert oft they braved of old
 The bordering Scot's incursion bold :
 Frowning defiance in their pride,
 Their vassals now and lords divide.
 From his fair hall on Greta banks,
 The Knight of Rokeby led his ranks,
 To aid the valiant northern Earls,
 Who drew the sword for royal Charles.
 Mortham, by marriage near allied,—
 His sister had been Rokeby's bride,
 Though long before the civil fray,
 In peaceful grave the lady lay,—
 Philip of Mortham raised his band,
 And marched at Fairfax's command ;
 While Wycliffe, bound by many a train
 Of kindred art with wily Vane,
 Less prompt to brave the bloody field,
 Made Barnard's battlements his shield,
 Secured them with the Lunedale powers,
 And for the Commons held the towers.

XXIX.

The lovely heir of Rokeby's Knight
 Waits in his halls the event of fight ;
 For England's war revered the claim
 Of every unprotected name,
 And spared, amid its fiercest rage,
 Childhood, and womanhood, and age.
 But Wilfrid, son to Rokeby's foe,
 Must the dear privilege forego,
 By Greta's side, in evening gray,
 To steal upon Matilda's way,
 Striving, with fond hypocrisy,
 For careless step and vacant eye ;
 Calming each anxious look and glance,
 To give the meeting all to chance,
 Or framing, as a fair excuse,
 The book, the pencil, or the muse ;
 Something to give, to sing, to say,
 Some modern tale, some ancient lay.
 Then, while the longed-for minutes last,—

Ah! minutes quickly over-past!—
Recording each expression free,
Of kind or careless courtesy,
Each friendly look, each softer tone,
As food for fancy when alone.
All this is o'er—but still, unseen,
Wilfrid may lurk in Eastwood green,
To watch Matilda's wonted round,
While springs his heart at every sound.
She comes—'tis but a passing sight,
Yet serves to cheat his weary night;
She comes not—he will wait the hour,
When her lamp lightens in the tower;
'Tis something yet, if, as she passed,
Her shade is o'er the lattice cast.
“What is my life, my hope?” he said;
“Alas! a transitory shade.”

XXX.

Thus wore his life, though reason strove
For mastery in vain with love,
Forcing upon his thoughts the sum
Of present woe and ills to come,
While still he turned impatient ear
From Truth's intrusive voice severe.
Gentle, indiff'rent, and subdued,
In all but this, unmoved he viewed
Each outward change of ill and good:
But Wilfrid, docile, soft, and mild,
Was Fancy's spoiled and wayward child,
In her bright car she bade him ride,
With one fair form to grace his side,
Or, in some wild and lone retreat,
Flung her high spells around his seat,
Bathed in her dews his languid head,
Her fairy mantle o'er him spread,
For him her opiates gave to flow,
Which he who tastes can ne'er forego,
And placed him in her circle, free
From every stern reality,
Till, to the Visionary, seem
Her day-dreams truth, and truth a dream.

XXXI.

Woe to the youth whom Fancy gains,
 Winning from Reason's hand the reins,
 Pity and woe! for such a mind
 Is soft, contemplative, and kind;
 And woe to those who train such youth,
 And spare to press the rights of truth,
 The mind to strengthen and anneal,
 While on the stithy glows the steel!
 O teach him, while your lessons last,
 To judge the present by the past;
 Remind him of each wish pursued,
 How rich it glowed with promised good:
 Remind him of each wish enjoyed,
 How soon his hopes possession cloyed!
 Tell him, we play unequal game,
 Whene'er we shoot by Fancy's aim!
 And, ere he strip him for her race,
 Show the conditions of the chase.
 Two sisters by the goal are set,
 Cold Disappointment and Regret:
 One disenchant's the winner's eyes,
 And strips of all its worth the prize;
 While one augments its gaudy show
 More to enhance the loser's woe.
 The victor sees his fairy gold
 Transformed, when won, to drossy mould,
 But still the vanquished mourns his loss,
 And rues, as gold, that glittering dross.

XXXII.

More wouldst thou know—yon tower survey,
 Yon couch unpressed since parting day,
 Yon untrimmed lamp, whose yellow gleam,
 Is mingling with the cold moonbeam,
 And yon thin form!—the hectic red
 On his pale cheek unequal spread;
 The head reclined, the loosened hair,
 The limbs relaxed, the mournful air.—
 See, he looks up;—a woful smile
 Lightens his woe-worn cheek a while,—
 'Tis fancy wakes some idle thought,
 To gild the ruin she has wrought;

For, like the bat of Indian brakes,
 Her pinions fan the wound she makes,
 And soothing thus the dreamer's pain,
 She drinks his life-blood from the vein.
 Now to the lattice turn his eyes,
 Vain hope! to see the sun arise.
 The moon with clouds is still o'ercast;
 Still howls by fits the stormy blast;
 Another hour must wear away,
 Ere the East kindle into day;
 And hark! to waste that weary hour,
 He tries the minstrel's magic power.

XXXIII.

SONG.

TO THE MOON.

Hail to thy cold and clouded beam,
 Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky!
 Hail, though the mists that o'er thee stream
 Lend to thy brow their sullen dye!
 How should thy pure and peaceful eye
 Untroubled view our scenes below,
 Or how a tearless beam supply
 To light a world of war and woe!

Fair Queen! I will not blame thee now,
 As once by Greta's fairy side;
 Each little cloud that dimmed thy brow
 Did then an angel's beauty hide.
 And of the shades I then could chide,
 Still are the thoughts to memory dear,
 For, while a softer strain I tried,
 They hid my blush and calmed my fear.

Then did I swear thy ray serene
 Was formed to light some lonely dell,
 By two fond lovers only seen,
 Reflected from the crystal well,
 Or sleeping on their mossy cell,
 Or quivering on the lattice bright,
 Or glancing on their couch, to tell
 How swiftly wanes the summer night!

XXXIV.

He starts—a step at this lone hour!
 A voice!—his father seeks the tower,
 With haggard look and troubled sense,
 Fresh from his dreadful conference.
 “Wilfrid!—what, not to sleep addressed?
 Thou hast no cares to chase thy rest.
 Mortham has fall’n on Marston-moor;
 Bertram brings warrant to secure
 His treasures, bought by spoil and blood,
 For the state’s use and public good.
 The menials will thy voice obey;
 Let his commission have its way,
 In every point, in every word.”—
 Then, in a whisper,—“Take thy sword!
 Bertram is—what I must not tell.
 I hear his hasty step—farewell!”

 CANTO SECOND.

I.

FAR in the chambers of the west,
 The gale had sighed itself to rest;
 The moon was cloudless now and clear,
 But pale, and soon to disappear.
 The thin gray clouds wax dimly light
 On Brusleton and Houghton height;
 And the rich dale, that eastward lay,
 Waited the wakening touch of day,
 To give its woods and cultured plain,
 And towers and spires, to light again.
 But, westward, Stanmore’s shapeless swell,
 And Lunedale wild, and Kelton-fell,
 And rock-begirdled Gilmanscar,
 And Arkingarth, lay dark afar;
 While, as a livelier twilight falls,
 Emerge proud Barnard’s bannered walls.
 High crowned he sits, in dawning pale,
 The sovereign of the lovely vale.

II.

What prospects, from his watch-tower high,
Gleam gradual on the warder's eye!—
Far sweeping to the east, he sees
Down his deep woods the course of Tees,
And tracks his wand'rings by the steam
Of summer vapors from the stream;
And ere he pace his destined hour
By Brackenbury's dungeon-tower,
These silver mists shall melt away,
And dew the woods with glitt'ring spray.
Then in broad lustre shall be shown
That mighty trench of living stone,
And each huge trunk that, from the side,
Reclines him o'er the darksome tide,
Where Tees, full many a fathom low,
Wears with his rage no common foe;
For pebbly bank, nor sand-bed here,
Nor clay-mound, checks his fierce career,
Condemned to mine a channelled way,
O'er solid sheets of marble gray.

III.

Nor Tees alone, in dawning bright,
Shall rush upon the ravished sight;
But many a tributary stream
Each from its own dark dell shall gleam;
Staindrop, who, from her silvan bowers,
Salutes proud Raby's battled towers;
The rural brook of Egliston,
And Balder, named from Odin's son;
And Greta, to whose banks ere long
We lead the lovers of the song;
And silver Lune, from Stanmore wild,
And fairy Thorsgill's murmuring child,
And last and least, but loveliest still,
Romantic Deepdale's slender rill.
Who in that dim-wood glen hath strayed,
Yet longed for Roslin's magic glade?
Who wand'ring there, hath sought to change,
Ev'n for that vale so stern and strange,
Where Cartland's Crag, fantastic rent,
Through her green copse like spires are sent?

Yet, Albin, yet the praise be thine,
 Thy scenes and story to combine!
 Thou bidd'st him, who by Roslin strays,
 List to the deeds of other days;
 'Mid Cartland's Crag thou show'st the cave,
 The refuge of thy champion brave;*
 Giving each rock its storied tale,
 Pouring a lay for every dale,
 Knitting, as with a moral band,
 Thy native legends with thy land,
 To lend each scene the int'rest high
 Which genius beams from beauty's eye.

IV.

Bertram awaited not the sight
 Which sunrise shows from Barnard's height,
 But from the towers, preventing day,
 With Wilfrid took his early way,
 While misty dawn, and moonbeam pale,
 Still mingled in the silent dale.
 By Barnard's bridge of stately stone,
 The southern bank of Tees they won;
 Their winding path then eastward cast,
 And Egliston's gray ruins passed;
 Each on his own deep visions bent,
 Silent and sad they onward went.
 Well may you think that Bertram's mood,
 To Wilfrid savage seemed and rude;
 Well may you think bold Risingham
 Held Wilfrid trivial, poor, and tame;
 And small the intercourse, I ween,
 Such uncongenial souls between.

V.

Stern Bertram shunned the nearer way,
 Through Rokeby's park and chase that lay,
 And skirting high the valley's ridge,
 They crossed by Greta's ancient bridge.
 Descending where her waters wind
 Free for a space and unconfined,

* Cartland Crag, near Lanark, celebrated as among the favorite retreats of Sir William Wallace.

As, 'scaped from Brignall's dark-wood glen,
She seeks wild Mortham's deeper den.
There, as his eye glanced o'er the mound,
Raised by that Legion long renowned,
Whose votive shrine asserts their claim,
Of pious, faithful, conquering fame,
"Stern sons of war!" sad Wilfrid sighed,
"Behold the boast of Roman pride!
What now of all your toils are known?
A grassy trench, a broken stone!"—
This to himself; for moral strain
To Bertram were addressed in vain.

VI.

Of different mood, a deeper sigh
Awoke, when Rokeby's turrets high*
Were northward in the dawning seen
To rear them o'er the thicket green.
O then, though Spenser's self had strayed
Beside him through the lovely glade,
Lending his rich luxuriant glow
Of Fancy, all its charms to show,
Pointing the stream rejoicing free,
As captive set at liberty,
Flashing her sparkling waves abroad,
And clam'ring joyful on her road;
Pointing where, up the sunny banks,
The trees retire in scattered ranks,
Save where, advanced before the rest,
On knoll or hillock rears his crest,
Lonely and huge, the giant Oak,
As champions, when their band is broke,
Stand forth to guard their rearward post,
The bulwark of the scattered host—
All this, and more, might Spenser say,
Yet waste in vain his magic lay,
While Wilfrid eyed the distant tower,
Whose lattice lights Matilda's bower.

* This ancient manor long gave name to a family by whom it is said to have been possessed from the Conquest downward, and who are, at different times, distinguished in history. It was the Baron of Rokeby who finally defeated the insurrection of the Earl of Northumberland during the reign of Henry IV.

VII.

The open vale is soon passed o'er,
 Rokeby, though nigh, is seen no more;
 Sinking 'mid Greta's thickets deep,
 A wild and darker course they keep,
 A stern and lone, yet lovely road,
 As e'er the foot of Minstrel trode!
 Broad shadows o'er their passage fell,
 Deeper and narrower grew the dell;
 It seemed some mountain, rent and riven,
 A channel for the stream had given,
 So high the cliffs of limestone gray
 Hung beetling o'er the torrent's way,
 Yielding, along their rugged base,
 A flinty footpath's niggard space,
 Where he, who winds 'twixt rock and wave,
 May hear the headlong torrent rave,
 And like a steed in frantic fit,
 That flings the froth from curb and bit,
 May view her chafe her waves to spray,
 O'er every rock that bars her way,
 Till foam-globes on her eddies ride,
 Thick as the schemes of human pride
 That down life's current drive amain,
 As frail, as frothy, and as vain!

VIII.

The cliffs that rear their haughty head
 High o'er the river's darksome bed,
 Were now all naked, wild, and gray,
 Now waving all with greenwood spray;
 Here trees to ev'ry crevice clung,
 And o'er the dell their branches hung;
 And there, all splintered and uneven,
 The shivered rocks ascend to heaven;
 Oft, too, the ivy swathed their breast,
 And wreathed its garland round their crest,
 Or from the spires bade loosely flare
 Its tendrils in the middle air,
 As pennons wont to wave of old
 O'er the high feast of Baron bold,
 When revelled loud the feudal rout,

And the arched halls returned their shout ;
Such and more wild is Greta's roar,
And such the echoes from her shore.
And so the ivied banners' gleam
Waved wildly o'er the brawling stream.

IX.

Now from the stream the rocks recede,
But leave between no sunny mead,
No, nor the spot of pebbly sand,
Oft found by such a mountain strand ;
Forming such warm and dry retreat,
As fancy deems the lonely seat,
Where hermit, wand'ring from his cell,
His rosary might love to tell.
But here, 'twixt rock and river, grew
A dismal grove of sable yew,
With whose sad tints were mingled seen
The blighted fir's sepulchral green.
Seemed that the trees their shadows cast
The earth that nourished them to blast ;
For never knew that swarthy grove
The verdant hue that fairies love ;
Nor wilding green, nor woodland flower,
Arose within its baleful bower ;
The dank and sable earth receives
Its only carpet from the leaves,
That from the with'ring branches cast,
Bestrewed the ground with every blast.
Though now the sun was o'er the hill,
In this dark spot 'twas twilight still,
Save that on Greta's farther side
Some straggling beams through copsewood glide ;
And wild and savage contrast made
That dingle's deep and funeral shade,
With the bright tints of early day,
Which, glimm'ring through the ivy spray,
On the opposing summit lay.

X.

The lated peasant shunned the dell ;
For Superstition went to tell
Of many a grisly sound and sight,

Scaring its path at dead of night.
 When Christmas logs blaze high and wide,
 Such wonders speed the festal tide ;
 While Curiosity and Fear,
 Pleasure and Pain, sit crouching near,
 Till childhood's cheek no longer glows,
 And village maidens lose the rose.
 The thrilling int'rest rises higher,
 The circle closes nigh and nigher,
 And shudd'ring glance is cast behind,
 As louder moans the wintry wind.
 Believe, that fitting scene was laid
 For such wild tales in Mortham glade ;
 For who had seen, on Greta's side,
 By that dim light fierce Bertram stride,
 In such a spot, at such an hour,—
 If touched by Superstition's power,
 Might well have deemed that Hell had given
 A murderer's ghost to upper heaven,
 While Wilfrid's form had seemed to glide
 Like his pale victim by his side.

XI.

Nor think to village swains alone
 Are these unearthly terrors known ;
 For not to rank nor sex confined
 Is this vain ague of the mind :
 Hearts firm as steel, as marble hard,
 'Gainst faith, and love, and pity barred,
 Have quaked, like aspen leaves in May,
 Beneath its universal sway.
 Bertram had listed many a tale
 Of wonder in his native dale,
 That in his secret soul retained
 The credence they in childhood gained :
 Nor less his wild advent'rous youth
 Believed in every legend's truth ;
 Learned when, beneath the tropic gale,
 Full swelled the vessel's steady sail,
 And the broad Indian moon her light
 Poured on the watch of middle night,
 When seamen love to hear and tell
 Of portent, prodigy, and spell :

What gales are sold on Lapland's shore,^{*}
 How whistle rash bids tempests roar,
 Of witch, of mermaid, and of sprite,
 Of Erick's cap and Elmo's light;†
 Or of that Phantom Ship, whose form
 Shoots like a meteor through the storm;
 When the dark scud comes driving hard,
 And lowered is every top-sail yard,
 And canvas wove in earthly looms,
 No more to brave the storm presumes:
 Then, 'mid the war of sea and sky,
 Top and top-gallant hoisted high,
 Full spread and crowded every sail,
 The Demon Frigate‡ braves the gale;
 And well the doomed spectators know
 The harbinger of wreck and woe.

XII.

Then, too, were told, in stifled tone,
 Marvels and omens all their own;
 How, by some desert isle or key,§
 Where Spaniards wrought their cruelty,
 Or where the savage pirate's mood
 Repaid it home in deeds of blood,
 Strange nightly sounds of woe and fear
 Appalled the list'ning Bucanier,

* The Lapland witches were famous for the sale of prosperous winds which they disposed of to credulous mariners.

† That these are general superstitions, is well known to all who have been on ship-board, or who have conversed with seamen. They farther assert, that Ericus, King of Sweden, was so familiar with the evil spirits, that which way soever he turned his cap, the wind would presently blow that way.

‡ This is an allusion to a well-known nautical superstition concerning a fantastic vessel, called by sailors the Flying Dutchman, and supposed to be seen about the latitude of the Cape of Good Hope. She is distinguished from earthly vessels by bearing a press of sail when all others are unable, from stress of weather, to show an inch of canvas. The apparition of the ship is considered by the mariners as the worst of all possible omens.

§ These keys are small sandy patches, appearing just above the surface of the ocean. As many of the atrocities which the bucaniers practised on their prisoners were committed in such spots, there are some of these keys which even now have an indifferent reputation among seamen, and where they are with difficulty prevailed on to remain ashore at night on account of the visionary terrors incident to places which have been thus contaminated.

Whose light-armed shallop anchored lay
 In ambush by the lonely bay.
 The groan of grief, the shriek of pain,
 Ring from the moonlight groves of cane;
 The fierce advent'rer's heart they scare,
 Who wearies mem'ry for a prayer,
 Curses the roadstead, and with gale
 Of early morning lifts the sail,
 To give, in thirst of blood and prey,
 A legend for another bay.

XIII.

Thus, as a man, a youth, a child
 Trained in the mystic and the wild,
 With this on Bertram's soul at times
 Rushed a dark feeling of his crimes;
 Such to his troubled soul their form,
 As the pale Death-ship to the storm,
 And such their omen dim and dread,
 As shrieks and voices of the dead,—
 That pang, whose transitory force
 Hovered 'twixt horror and remorse;
 That pang, perchance, his bosom pressed,
 As Wilfrid sudden he addressed:—
 "Wilfrid, this glen is never trode
 Until the sun rides high abroad;
 Yet twice have I beheld to-day
 A Form, that seemed to dog our way;
 Twice from my glance it seemed to flee
 And shroud itself by cliff or tree.
 How think'st thou?—Is our path waylaid?
 Or hath thy sire my trust betrayed?
 If so"—Ere, starting from his dream,
 That turned upon a gentler theme,
 Wilfrid had roused him to reply,
 Bertram sprung forward, shouting high,
 "Whate'er thou art, thou now shalt stand!"
 And forth he darted, sword in hand.

XIV.

As bursts the levin in its wrath,
 He shot him down the sounding path;

Rock, wood, and stream, rang wildly out,
To his loud step and savage shout.
Seems that the object of his race
Hath scaled the cliffs; his frantic chase
Sidelong he turns, and now 'tis bent
Right up the rock's tall battlement;
Straining each sinew to ascend,
Foot, hand, and knee, their aid must lend.
Wilfrid, all dizzy with dismay,
Views, from beneath, his dreadful way:
Now to the oak's warped roots he clings,
Now trusts his weight to ivy strings;
Now, like the wild-goat, must he dare
An unsupported leap in air;
Hid in the shrubby rain-course now,
You mark him by the crashing bough,
And by his corslet's sullen clank,
And by the stones spurned from the bank,
And by the hawk scared from her nest,
And ravens croaking o'er their guest,
Who deem his forfeit limbs shall pay
The tribute of his bold essay.

XV.

See, he emerges!—desperate now
All farther course—Yon beetling brow,
In craggy nakedness sublime,
What heart or foot shall dare to climb?
It bears no tendril for his clasp,
Presents no angle to his grasp:
Sole stay his foot may rest upon,
Is yon earth-bedded jetting stone.
Balanced on such precarious prop,
He strains his grasp to reach the top.
Just as the dangerous stretch he makes,
By heaven, his faithless footstool shakes!
Beneath his tottering bulk it bends,
It sways... it loosens... it descends!
And downward holds its headlong way,
Crashing o'er rock and copsewood spray.
Loud thunders shake the echoing dell!—
Fell it alone?—alone it fell.
Just on the very verge of fate,

The hardy Bertram's falling weight
 He trusted to his sinewy hands,
 And on the top unharmed he stands!

XVI.

Wilfrid a safer path pursued ;
 At intervals where, roughly hewed,
 Rude steps ascending from the dell
 Rendered the cliffs accessible.
 By circuit slow he thus attained
 The height that Risingham had gained,
 And when he issued from the wood,
 Before the gate of Mortham stood.*
 'Twas a fair scene! the sunbeam lay
 On battled tower and portal gray :
 And from the grassy slope he sees
 The Greta flow to meet the Tees ;
 Where, issuing from her darksome bed,
 She caught the morning's eastern red,
 And through the softening vale below
 Rolled her bright waves, in rosy glow.
 All blushing, to her bridal bed,
 Like some shy maid in convent bred ;
 While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay,
 Sing forth her nuptial roundelay.

XVII.

'Twas sweetly sung, that roundelay ;
 That summer morn shone blithe and gay ;
 But morning beam, and wild-bird's call,
 Awaked not Mortham's silent hall.
 No porter, by the low-browed gate,
 Took in the wonted niche his seat ;
 To the paved court no peasant drew .
 Waked to their toil no menial crew ;
 The maiden's carol was not heard,
 As to her morning task she fared :
 In the void offices around,
 Rung not a hoof, nor bayed a hound ;

* The situation of Mortham is eminently beautiful, occupying a high bank, at the bottom of which the Greta winds out of the dark, narrow, and romantic dell, which the text has attempted to describe, and flows onward through a more open valley to meet the Tees about a quarter of a mile from the castle

Nor eager steed, with shrilling neigh,
 Accused the lagging groom's delay;
 Untrimmed, undressed, neglected now,
 Was alleys walk and orchard bough:
 All spoke the master's absent care,
 All spoke neglect and disrepair.
 South of the gate, an arrow flight,
 Two mighty elms their limbs unite,
 As if a canopy, to spread
 O'er the lone dwelling of the dead;
 For their huge boughs in arches bent
 Above a massive monument,
 Carved o'er in ancient Gothic wise,
 With many a scutcheon and device:
 There, spent with toil and sunk in gloom,
 Bertram stood pondering by the tomb.

XVIII.

"It vanished, like a flitting ghost!
 Behind this tomb," he said, "'twas lost—
 This tomb, where oft I deemed lies stored
 Of Mortham's Indian wealth the hoard.
 'Tis true, the aged servants said
 Here his lamented wife is laid;
 But weightier reasons may be guessed
 For their lord's strict and stern behest,
 That none should on his steps intrude,
 Whene'er he sought this solitude.—
 An ancient mariner I knew,
 What time I sailed with Morgan's crew,
 Who oft, 'mid our carousals, spake
 Of Raleigh, Forbisher, and Drake;
 Adventurous hearts! who bartered, bold,
 Their English steel for Spanish gold.
 Trust not, would his experience say,
 Captain or comrade with your prey;
 But seek some charnel, when, at full,
 The moon gilds skeleton and skull:
 There dig, and tomb your precious heap,
 And bid the dead your treasure keep:*

* If time did not permit the Bucaniers to lavish away their plunder in their usual debaucheries, they were wont to hide it, in the desert islands and keys which they frequented. They are said to have had recourse to

Sure stewards they, if fitting spell
 Their service to the task compel.
 Lacks there such charnel?—kill a slave,
 Or prisoner, on the treasure-grave.
 And bid his discontented ghost
 Stalk nightly on his lonely post.—
 Such was his tale. Its truth, I ween,
 Is in my morning vision seen.”

XIX.

Wilfrid, who scorned the legend wild,
 In mingled mirth and pity smiled,
 Much marvelling that a breast so bold
 In such fond tale belief should hold;
 But yet of Bertram sought to know
 The apparition's form and show.—
 The power within the guilty breast,
 Oft vanquished, never quite suppressed,
 That unsubdued and lurking lies
 To take the felon by surprise,
 And force him, as by magic spell,
 In his despite his guilt to tell,—
 That power in Bertram's breast awoke;
 Scarce conscious he was heard, he spoke;
 “'Twas Mortham's form, from foot to head!
 His morion, with the plume of red,
 His shape, his mien—'twas Mortham, right
 As when I slew him in the fight.”—
 “Thou slay him?—thou?”—With conscious start
 He heard, then manned his haughty heart—
 “I slew him?—I!—I had forgot
 Thou, stripling, knew'st not of the plot.
 But it is spoken—nor will I
 Deed done, or spoken word, deny.
 I slew him; I! for thankless pride;—
 'Twas by this hand that Mortham died!”

XX.

Wilfrid, of gentle hand and heart,
 Averse to every active part,

horrid ritual, in order to secure an unearthly guardian to their treasures. They killed a Negro or Spaniard, and buried him with the treasure, believing that his spirit would haunt the spot, and terrify away all intruders.

But most averse to martial broil,
From danger shrunk, and turned from toil
Yet the meek lover of the lyre
Nursed one brave spark of noble fire ;
Against injustice, fraud, or wrong,
His blood beat high, his hand waxed strong.
Not his the nerves that could sustain,
Unshaken, danger, toil, and pain ;
But, when that spark blazed forth to flame,
He rose superior to his frame.
And now it came, that generous mood ;
And, in full current of his blood,
On Bertram he laid desperate hand,
Placed firm his foot, and drew his brand.
“Should every fiend, to whom thou’rt sold,
Rise in thine aid, I keep my hold.—
Arouse there, ho! take spear and sword!
Attack the murderer of your Lord!”

XXI.

A moment, fixed as by a spell,
Stood Bertram—it seemed miracle,
That one so feeble, soft, and tame,
Set grasp on warlike Risingham.
But when he felt a feeble stroke,
The fiend within the ruffian woke!
To wrench the sword from Wilfrid’s hand,
To dash him headlong on the sand,
Was but one moment’s work,—one more
Had drenched the blade in Wilfrid’s gore ;
But, in the instant it arose,
To end his life, his love, his woes,
A warlike form, that marked the scene,
Presents his rapier sheathed between,
Parries the fast-descending blow,
And steps ’twixt Wilfrid and his foe ;
Nor then unscabbarded his brand,
But, sternly pointing with his hand,
With monarch’s voice forbade the fight,
And motioned Bertram from his sight.
“Go, and repent,” he said, “while time
Is given thee : add not crime to crime.”

XXII.

Mute, and uncertain, and amazed,
 As on a vision Bertram gazed!
 'Twas Mortham's bearing, bold and high,
 His sinewy frame, his falcon eye,
 His look and accent of command,
 The martial gesture of his hand,
 His stately form, spare-built and tall,
 His war-bleached locks—'twas Mortham all.
 Through Bertram's dizzy brain career
 A thousand thoughts, and all of fear;
 His wavering faith received not quite
 The form he saw as Mortham's sprite,
 But more he feared it, if it stood
 His lord, in living flesh and blood.—
 What spectre can the charnel send,
 So dreadful as an injured friend?
 Then, too, the habit of command,
 Used by the leader of the band,
 When Risingham, for many a day,
 Had marched and fought beneath his sway,
 Tamed him—and, with reverted face,
 Backwards he bore his sullen pace;
 Oft stopped, and oft on Mortham stared,
 And dark as rated mastiff glared;
 But when the tramp of steeds was heard,
 Plunged in the glen, and disappeared;—
 Nor longer there the Warrior stood,
 Retiring eastward through the wood;
 But first to Wilfrid warning gives,
 "Tell thou to none that Mortham lives."

XXIII.

Still rung these words in Wilfrid's ear,
 Hinting he knew not what of fear;
 When nearer came the courser's tread,
 And, with his father at their head,
 Of horsemen armed a gallant power
 Reined up their steeds before the tower.
 "Whence these pale looks, my son?" he said:
 "Where's Bertram?—Why that naked blade?"—
 Wilfrid ambiguously replied,
 (For Mortham's charge his honor tied,)

“Bertram is gone—the villain’s word
 Avouched him murderer of his lord!
 Even now we fought—but, when your tread
 Announced you nigh, the felon fled.”
 In Wycliffe’s conscious eye appear
 A guilty hope, a guilty fear;
 On his pale brow the dewdrop broke,
 And his lip quivered as he spoke:—

XXIV.

“A murderer!—Philip Mortham died
 Amid the battle’s wildest tide.
 Wilfrid, or Bertram raves, or you!
 Yet, grant such strange confession true,
 Pursuit were vain—let him fly far—
 Justice must sleep in civil war.”
 A gallant Youth rode near his side,
 Brave Rokeby’s page, in battle tried;
 That morn, an embassy of weight
 He brought to Barnard’s castle-gate,
 And followed now in Wycliffe’s train,
 An answer for his lord to gain.
 His steed, whose arched and sable neck
 A hundred wreaths of foam bédeck,
 Chafed not against the curb more high
 Than he at Oswald’s cold reply;
 He bit his lip, implored his saint,
 (His the old faith)—then burst restraint.

XXV.

“Yes! I beheld his bloody fall,
 By that base traitor’s dastard ball,
 Just when I thought to measure sword,
 Presumptuous hope! with Mortham’s lord.
 And shall the murderer ’scape, who slew
 His leader, generous, brave, and true?
 Escape, while on the dew you trace
 The marks of his gigantic pace?
 No! ere the sun that dew shall dry,
 False Risingham shall yield or die.—
 Ring out the castle ’larum bell!
 Arouse the peasants with the knell!
 Meantime disperse—ride, gallants, ride!

Beset the wood on every side.
 But if among you one there be,
 That honors Mortham's memory,
 Let him dismount and follow me!
 Else on your crests sit fear and shame,
 And foul suspicion dog your name!"

XXVI.

Instant to earth young REDMOND sprung;
 Instant on earth the harness rung
 Of twenty men of Wycliffe's band,
 Who waited not their lord's command.
 Redmond his spurs from buskins drew,
 His mantle from his shoulders threw,
 His pistols in his belt he placed,
 The greenwood gained, the footsteps traced,
 Shouted like huntsman to his hounds,
 "To cover, hark!"—and in he bounds.
 Scarce heard was Oswald's anxious cry,
 "Suspicion! yes—pursue him—fly—
 But venture not, in useless strife,
 On ruffian desperate of his life,
 Whoever finds him, shoot him dead!
 Five hundred nobles for his head!"

XXVII.

The horsemen galloped to make good
 Each path that issued from the wood.
 Loud from the thickets rung the shout
 Of Redmond and his eager route;
 With them was Wilfrid, stung with ire,
 And envying Redmond's martial fire,
 And emulous of fame.—But where
 Is Oswald, noble Mortham's heir?
 He, bound by honor, law, and faith,
 Avenger of his kinsman's death?—
 Leaning against the elmin tree,
 With drooping head and slackened knee,
 And clenched teeth, and close-clasped hands,
 In agony of soul he stands!
 His downcast eye on earth is bent
 His soul to every sound is lent,

For in each shout that cleaves the air,
May ring discovery and despair.

XXVIII.

What 'vailed it him, that brightly played
The morning sun on Mortham's glade?
All seems in giddy round to ride,
Like objects on a stormy tide,
Seen eddying by the moonlight dim,
Imperfectly to sink and swim.
What 'vailed it, that the fair domain,
Its battled mansion, hill, and plain,
On which the sun so brightly shone,
Envied so long, was now his own?
The lowest dungeon, in that hour,
Of Brackenbury's dismal tower,
Had been his choice, could such a doom
Have opened Mortham's bloody tomb!
Forced, too, to turn unwilling ear
To each surmise of hope or fear,
Murmured among the rustics round,
Who gathered at the 'larum sound;
He dared not turn his head away,
E'en to look up to heaven to pray,
Or call on hell, in bitter mood,
For one sharp death-shot from the wood!

XXIX.

At length o'erpast that dreadful space,
Back straggling came the scattered chase;
Jaded and weary, horse and man,
Returned the troopers, one by one.
Wilfrid, the last, arrived to say,
All trace was lost of Bertram's way,
Though Redmond still, up Brignal wood,
The hopeless quest in vain pursued.—
O, fatal doom of human race!
What tyrant passions passions chase!
Remorse from Oswald's brow is gone,
Avarice and pride resume their throne;
The pang of instant terror by,
They dictate thus their slave's reply:

XXX.

“Ay—let him range like hasty hound!
 And if the grim wolf’s lair be found,
 Small is my care how goes the game
 With Redmond, or with Risingham.
 Nay, answer not, thou simple boy!
 Thy fair Matilda, all so coy
 To thee, is of another mood
 To that bold youth of Erin’s blood.
 Thy ditties will she freely praise,
 And pay thy pains with courtly phrase;
 In a rough path will oft command—
 Accept at least—thy friendly hand;
 His she avoids, or, urged and prayed,
 Unwilling takes his proffered aid,
 While conscious passion plainly speaks
 In downcast look and blushing cheeks.
 Whene’er he sings, will she glide nigh,
 And all her soul is in her eye;
 Yet doubts she still to tender free
 The wonted words of courtesy.
 These are strong signs!—yet wherefore sigh,
 And wipe, effeminate, thine eye?
 Thine shall she be, if thou attend
 The counsels of thy sire and friend.

XXXI.

“Scarce wert thou gone, when peep of light
 Brought genuine news of Marston’s fight.
 Brave Cromwell turned the doubtful tide,
 And conquest blessed the rightful side;
 Three thousand cavaliers lie dead,
 Rupert and that bold Marquis fled;
 Nobles and knights, so proud of late,
 Must fine for freedom and estate.
 Of these, committed to my charge,
 Is Rokeby, prisoner at large;
 Redmond, his page, arrived to say
 He reaches Barnard’s towers to-day.
 Right heavy shall his ransom be,
 Unless that maid compound with thee!
 Go to her now—be bold of cheer
 While her soul floats ’twixt hope and fear:

It is the very change of tide,
 When best the female heart is tried—
 Pride, prejudice, and modesty,
 Are in the current swept to sea;
 And the bold swain, who plies his oar,
 May lightly row his bark to shore.”

CANTO THIRD.

I.

THE hunting tribes of air and earth
 Respect the brethren of their birth;
 Nature, who loves the claim of kind,
 Less cruel chase to each assigned.
 The falcon, poised on soaring wing,
 Watches the wild-duck by the spring;
 The slow-hound wakes the fox's lair;
 The greyhound presses on the hare;
 The eagle pounces on the lamb;
 The wolf devours the fleecy dam:
 Even tiger fell, and sullen bear,
 Their likeness and their lineage spare:
 Man, only, mars kind Nature's plan,
 And turns the fierce pursuit on man;
 Plying war's desultory trade,
 Incursion, flight, and ambuscade,
 Since Nimrod, Cush's mighty son,
 At first the bloody game begun.

II.

The Indian, prowling for his prey,
 Who hears the settlers track his way,
 And knows in distant forest far
 Camp his red brethren of the war;
 He, when each double and disguise
 To baffle the pursuit he tries,
 Low crouching now his head to hide,

Where swampy streams through rushes glide,
 Now covering with the withered leaves
 The foot-prints that the dew receives;
 He, skilled in every silvan guile,
 Knows not, nor tries, such various wile,
 As Risingham, when on the wind
 Arose the loud pursuit behind.
 In Redesdale his youth had heard
 Each art her wily dalesmen dared,
 When Rookan-edge, and Redswair high,
 To bugle rung and bloodhound's cry,
 Announcing Jedwood-axe and spear,
 And Lid'sdale riders in the rear;
 And well his venturous life had proved
 The lessons that his childhood loved.*

III.

Oft had he shown, in climes afar,
 Each attribute of roving war;
 The sharpened ear, the piercing eye,
 The quick resolve in danger nigh;
 The speed, that in the flight or chase
 Outstripped the Charib's rapid race;
 The steady brain, the sinewy limb,
 To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim;
 The iron frame, inured to bear
 Each dire inclemency of air,
 Nor less confirmed to undergo
 Fatigue's faint chill, and famine's throe.
 These arts he proved, his life to save
 In peril oft by land and wave,
 On Arawaca's desert shore,
 Or where La Plata's billows roar,
 When oft the sons of vengeful Spain
 Tracked the marauder's steps in vain.
 These arts, in Indian warfare tried,
 Must save him now by Greta's side.

* Reidswair, famed for a skirmish to which it gives name, is on the very edge of the Carter-Fell, which divides England from Scotland. The Rookan is a place upon Reedwater. Bertram, being described as a native of these dales, where the habits of hostile depredation long survived the union of the crowns, may have been, in some degree, prepared by education for the exercise of a similar trade in the wars of the Bucaniers.

IV.

'Twas then, in hour of utmost need,
He proved his courage, art, and speed.
Now slow he stalked with stealthy pace,
Now started forth in rapid race,
Oft doubling back in mazy train,
To blind the trace the dews retain ;
Now clomb the rocks projecting high,
To baffle the pursuer's eye ;
Now sought the stream, whose brawling sound
The echo of his footsteps drowned.
But if the forest verge he nears,
There trample steeds, and glimmer spears ;
If deeper down the copse he drew,
He heard the rangers' loud halloo,
Beating each cover while they came,
As if to start the silvan game.
'Twas then—like tiger close beset
At every pass with toil and net,
'Countered, where'er he turns his glare,
By clashing arms and torches' flare,
Who meditates, with furious bound,
To burst on hunter, horse, and hound,—
'Twas then that Bertram's soul arose,
Prompting to rush upon his foes :
But as that crouching tiger, cowed
By brandished steel and shouting crowd,
Retreats beneath the jungle's shroud,
Bertram suspends his purpose stern,
And couches in the brake and fern,
Hiding his face, lest foemen spy
The sparkle of his swarthy eye.

V.

Then Bertram might the bearing trace
Of the bold youth who led the chase ;
Who paused to list for every sound,
Climbed every height to look around,
Then rushing on with naked sword,
Each dingle's bosky depths explored.
'Twas Redmond—by the azure eye ;
'Twas Redmond—by the locks that fly
Disordered from his glowing cheek :

Mien, face, and form, young Redmond speak.
 A form more active, light, and strong,
 Ne'er shot the ranks of war along ;
 The modest, yet the manly mien,
 Might grace the court of maiden queen ;
 A face more fair you well might find,
 For Redmond's knew the sun and wind,
 Nor boasted, from their tinge when free,
 The charm of regularity ;
 But every feature had the power
 To aid the expression of the hour :
 Whether gay wit, and humor sly,
 Danced laughing in his light-blue eye ;
 Or bended brow, and glance of fire,
 And kindling cheek, spoke Erin's ire ;
 Or soft and saddened glances show
 Her ready sympathy with woe ;
 Or in that wayward mood of mind,
 When various feelings are combined,
 When joy and sorrow mingle near,
 And hope's bright wings are checked by fear,
 And rising doubts keep transport down,
 And anger lends a short-lived frown ;
 In that strange mood which maids approve
 Even when they dare not call it love ;
 With every change his features played,
 As aspens show the light and shade.

VI.

Well Risingham young Redmond knew :
 And much he marvelled that the crew,
 Roused to revenge bold Mortham dead,
 Were by that Mortham's foeman led ;
 For never felt his soul the woe,
 That wails a generous foeman low,
 Far less that sense of justice strong,
 That wrecks a generous foeman's wrong.
 But small his leisure now to pause ;
 Redmond is first, whate'er the cause :
 And twice that Redmond came so near
 Where Bertram couched like hunted deer,
 The very boughs his steps displace
 Rustled against the ruffian's face,

Who, desperate, twice prepared to start,
And plunge his dagger in his heart!
But Redmond turned a different way,
And the bent boughs resumed their sway,
And Bertram held it wise, unseen,
Deeper to plunge in coppice green.
Thus, circled in his coil, the snake,
When roving hunters beat the brake,
Watches with red and glistening eye,
Prepared, if heedless step draw nigh,
With forked tongue and venom'd fang
Instant to dart the deadly pang;
But if the intruders turn aside,
Away his coils unfolded glide,
And through the deep savannah wind,
Some undisturbed retreat to find.

VII.

But Bertram, as he backward drew,
And heard the loud pursuit renew,
And Redmond's hollo on the wind,
Oft muttered in his savage mind—
“Redmond O'Neale! wert thou and I
Alone this day's event to try,
With not a second here to see,
But the gray cliff and oaken tree,—
That voice of thine, that shouts so loud,
Should ne'er repeat its summons proud!
No! nor e'er try its melting power
Again in maiden's summer bower.”
Eluded, now behind him die,
Faint and more faint, each hostile cry;
He stands in Scargill wood alone,
Nor hears he now a harsher tone
Than the hoarse cushat's plaintive cry,
Or Greta's sound that murmurs by;
And on the dale, so lone and wild,
The summer sun in quiet smiled.

VIII.

He listened long with anxious heart,
Ear bent to hear, and foot to start,
And, while his stretched attention glows,

Refused his weary frame repose.
 'Twas silence all—he laid him down,
 Where purple heath profusely strown,
 And throatwort, with its azure bell,
 And moss and thyme his cushion swell.
 There, spent with toil, he listless eyed
 The course of Greta's playful tide;
 Beneath, her banks now eddying dun,
 Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
 As, dancing over rock and stone,
 In yellow light her currents shone,
 Matching in hue the favorite gem
 Of Albin's mountain-diadem.
 Then, tired to watch the current's play,
 He turned his weary eyes away,
 To where the bank opposing showed
 Its huge, square cliffs, through shaggy wood.
 One, prominent above the rest,
 Reared to the sun its pale gray breast;
 Around its broken summit grew
 The hazel rude, and sable yew;
 A thousand varied lichens dyed
 Its waste and weather-beaten side,
 And round its rugged basis lay,
 By time or thunder rent away,
 Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
 Were mantled now by verdant thorn.
 Such was the scene's wild majesty,
 That filled stern Bertram's gazing eye.

IX.

In sullen mood he lay reclined,
 Revolving, in his stormy mind,
 The felon deed, the fruitless guilt,
 His patron's blood by treason spilt;
 A crime, it seemed, so dire and dread,
 That it had power to wake the dead.
 Then, pond'ring on his life betrayed
 By Oswald's art to Redmond's blade,
 In treacherous purpose to withhold,
 So seemed it, Mortham's promised gold,
 A deep and full revenge he vowed
 On Redmond, forward, fierce, and proud;

Revenge on Wilfrid—on his sire
 Redoubled vengeance, swift and dire!—
 If, in such mood, (as legends say,
 And well believed that simple day,)
 The Enemy of Man has power
 To profit by the evil hour,
 Here stood a wretch, prepared to change
 His soul's redemption for revenge!*
 But though his vows, with such a fire
 Of earnest and intense desire
 For vengeance dark and fell, were made,
 As well might reach hell's lowest shade,
 No deeper clouds the grove embrowned,
 No nether thunders shook the ground;—
 The demon knew his vassal's heart,
 And spared temptation's needless art.

X.

Oft, mingled with the direful theme,
 Came Mortham's form—Was it a dream?
 Or had he seen, in vision true,
 That very Mortham whom he slew?
 Or had in living flesh appeared
 The only man on earth he feared?—
 To try the mystic cause intent,
 His eyes, that on the cliff were bent,
 'Countered at once a dazzling glance,
 Like sunbeam flashed from sword or lance.
 At once he started as for fight,
 But not a foeman was in sight;
 He heard the cushat's murmur hoarse,
 He heard the river's sounding course;
 The solitary woodlands lay,
 As slumb'ring in the summer ray.
 He gazed, like lion roused, around,
 Then sunk again upon the ground.
 'Twas but, he thought, some fitful beam,
 Glanced sudden from the sparkling stream;
 Then plunged him from his gloomy train

* It is agreed by all writers upon magic and witchcraft, that revenge was the most common motive for the pretended compact between Satan and his vassals.

Of ill-connected thoughts again,
 Until a voice behind him cried,
 "Bertram! well met on Greta side."

XI.

Instant his sword was in his hand,
 As instant sunk the ready brand;
 Yet, dubious still, opposed he stood
 To him that issued from the wood:
 "Guy Denzil!—is it thou?" he said;
 "Do we two meet in Scargill shade!—
 Stand back a space!—thy purpose show,
 Whether thou com'st as friend or foe.
 Report hath said, that Denzil's name
 From Rokeby's band was razed with shame."—
 "A shame I owe that hot O'Neale,
 Who told his knight, in peevish zeal,
 Of my marauding on the clowns
 Of Calverley and Bradford downs.*
 I reckon not. In a war to strive,
 Where, save the leaders, none can thrive,
 Suits ill my mood; and better game
 Awaits us both, if thou'rt the same
 Unscrupulous, bold Risingham,
 Who watched with me in midnight dark,
 To snatch a deer from Rokeby-park.
 How think'st thou?"—"Speak thy purpose out;
 I love not mystery or doubt."—

XII.

"Then list.—Not far there lurk a crew
 Of trusty comrades, stanch and true,
 Gleaned from both factions—Roundheads, freed
 From cant of sermon and of creed;
 And Cavaliers, whose souls, like mine,
 Spurn at the bonds of discipline.
 Wiser, we judge, by dale and wold,
 A warfare of our own to hold,

* The troops of the King, when they first took the field, were as well disciplined as could be expected from circumstances. But as the circumstances of Charles became less favorable, and his funds for regularly paying his forces decreased, habits of military license prevailed among them in greater excess.

Than breathe our last on battle-down,
 For cloak or surplice, mace or crown.
 Our schemes are laid, our purpose set,
 A chief and leader lack we yet.—
 Thou art a wanderer, it is said ;
 For Mortham's death, thy steps waylaid,
 Thy head at price—so say our spies,
 Who range the valley in disguise.
 Join then with us :—though wild debate
 And wrangling rend our infant state,
 Each to an equal loth to bow,
 Will yield to chief renowned as thou."

XIII.

"Even now," thought Bertram, passion-stirred,
 "I called on hell, and hell has heard!
 What lack I, vengeance to command,
 But of stanch comrades such a band?
 This Denzil, vowed to every evil,
 Might read a lesson to the devil.
 Well, be it so! each knave and fool
 Shall serve as my revenge's tool."—
 Aloud, "I take thy proffer, Guy,
 But tell me where thy comrades lie?"
 "Not far from hence," Guy Denzil said ;
 "Descend, and cross the river's bed,
 Where rises yonder cliff so gray."
 "Do thou," said Bertram, "lead the way."
 Then muttered, "It is best make sure ;
 Guy Denzil's faith was never pure."
 He followed down the steep descent,
 Then through the Greta's streams they went ;
 And, when they reached the farther shore,
 They stood the lonely cliff before.

XIV.

With wonder Bertram heard within
 The flinty rock a murmured din ;
 But when Guy pulled the wilding spray,
 And brambles, from its base away,
 He saw, appearing to the air,
 A little entrance, low and square,
 Like opening cell of hermit lone,

Dark, winding through the living stone.
 Here entered Denzil, Bertram here ;
 And loud and louder on their ear,
 As from the bowels of the earth,
 Resounded shouts of boisterous mirth.
 Of old, the cavern strait and rude,
 In slaty rock the peasant hewed ;
 And Brignall's woods, and Scargill's, wave,
 E'en now, o'er many a sister cave,
 Where, far within the darksome rift,
 The wedge and lever ply their thrift.
 But war had silenced rural trade,
 And the deserted mine was made
 The banquet-hall and fortress too,
 Of Denzil and his desperate crew.—
 There Guilt his anxious revel kept ;
 There, on his sordid pallet, slept
 Guilt-born Excess, the goblet drained
 Still in his slumbering grasp retained ;
 Regret was there, his eye still cast
 With vain repining on the past ;
 Among the feasters waited near
 Sorrow, and unrepentant Fear,
 And Blasphemy, to frenzy driven,
 With his own crimes reproaching heaven ;
 While Bertram showed, amid the crew,
 The Master-Fiend that Milton drew.

XV.

Hark ! the loud revel wakes again,
 To greet the leader of the train.
 Behold the group by the pale lamp,
 That struggles with the earthy damp.
 By what strange features Vice hath known,
 To single out and mark her own !
 Yet some there are, whose brows retain
 Less deeply stamped her brand and stain.
 See yon pale stripling ! when a boy,
 A mother's pride, a father's joy !
 Now, 'gainst the vault's rude walls reclined,
 An early image fills his mind :
 The cottage, once his sire's, he sees,
 Embowered upon the banks of Tees ;

He views sweet Winston's woodland scene,
 And shares the dance on Gainford-green.
 A tear is springing—but the zest
 Of some wild tale, or brutal jest,
 Hath to loud laughter stirred the rest.
 On him they call, the aptest mate
 For jovial song and merry feat;
 Fast flies his dream—with dauntless air,
 As one victorious o'er Despair,
 He bids the ruddy cup go round,
 Till sense and sorrow both are drowned:
 And soon, in merry wassail, he,
 The life of all their revelry,
 Peals his loud song!—The muse has found
 Her blossoms on the wildest ground,
 'Mid noxious weeds at random strewed,
 Themselves all profitless and rude.—
 With desperate merriment he sung,
 The cavern to the chorus rung;
 Yet mingled with his reckless glee
 Remorse's bitter agony.

XVI.

SONG.

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there,
 Would grace a summer queen.
 And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
 Beneath the turrets high,
 A Maiden on the castle wall
 Was singing merrily,—

CHORUS.

“O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
 Than reign our English queen.”—

“If, Maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
 To leave both tower and town,
 Thou first must guess what life lead we,
 That dwell by dale and down?”

And if thou canst that riddle read,
 As read full well you may,
 Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
 As blithe as Queen of May.”—

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, “Brignall banks are fair,
 And Greta woods are green;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
 Than reign our English queen.

XVII.

“I read you, by your bugle-horn,
 And by your palfrey good,
 I read you for a ranger sworn,
 To keep the king's greenwood.”—
 “A ranger, lady, winds his horn,
 And 'tis at peep of light;
 His blast is heard at merry morn,
 And mine at dead of night.”—

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, “Brignall banks are fair,
 And Greta woods are gay;
 I would I were with Edmund there,
 To reign his Queen of May!

“With burnished brand and musketoon,
 So gallantly you come,
 I read you for a bold Dragoon,
 That lists the tuck of drum.”—
 “I list no more the tuck of drum,
 No more the trumpet hear;
 But when the beetle sounds his hum,
 My comrades take the spear.

CHORUS.

“And, O! though Brignall banks be fair,
 And Greta woods be gay,
 Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
 Would reign my Queen of May!

XVIII.

“Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
 A nameless death I'll die;

The fiend, whose lantern lights the mead,
 Were better mate than I!
 And when I'm with my comrades met,
 Beneath the greenwood bough,
 What once we were we all forget,
 Nor think what we are now,

CHORUS.

Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen."

When Edmund ceased his simple song,
 Was silence on the sullen throng,
 Till waked some ruder mate their glee,
 With note of coarser minstrelsy.
 But, far apart, in dark divan,
 Denzil and Bertram many a plan,
 Of import foul and fierce, designed,
 While still on Bertram's grasping mind
 The wealth of murdered Mortham hung;
 Though half he feared his daring tongue,
 When it should give his wishes birth,
 Might raise a spectre from the earth!

XIX.

At length his wondrous tale he told;
 When, scornful, smiled his comrade bold;
 For, trained in license of a court,
 Religion's self was Denzil's sport:
 Then judge in what contempt he held
 The visionary tales of eld!
 His awe for Bertram scarce repressed
 The unbeliever's sneering jest.
 "Twere hard," he said, "for sage or seer,
 To spell the subject of your fear;
 Nor do I boast the art renowned,
 Vision and omen to expound.
 Yet, faith if I must needs afford
 To spectre, watching treasured hoard,
 As bandog keeps his master's roof,
 Bidding the plunderer stand aloof,

This doubt remains—thy goblin gaunt
 Hath chosen ill his ghostly haunt;
 For why his guard on Mortham hold,
 When Rokeby castle hath the gold
 Thy patron won on Indian soil,
 By stealth, by piracy, and spoil?”—

XX.

At this he paused—for angry shame
 Lowered on the brow of Risingham.
 He blushed to think, that he should seem
 Assertor of an airy dream,
 And gave his wrath another theme.
 “Denzil,” he says, “though lowly laid,
 Wrong not the memory of the dead;
 For, while he lived, at Mortham’s look
 Thy very soul, Guy Denzil, shook!
 And when he taxed thy breach of word
 To yon fair Rose of Allenford,
 I saw thee crouch like chastened hound,
 Whose back the huntsman’s lash hath found.
 Nor dare to call his foreign wealth
 The spoil of piracy or stealth;
 He won it bravely with his brand,
 When Spain waged warfare with our land.
 Mark, too—I brook no idle jeer,
 Nor couple Bertram’s name with fear;
 Mine is but half the demon’s lot,
 For I believe, but tremble not.—
 Enough of this.—Say, why this hoard
 Thou deem’st at Rokeby castle stored;
 Or, think’st that Mortham would bestow
 His treasure with his faction’s foe?”

XXI.

Soon quenched was Denzil’s ill-timed mirth;
 Rather he would have seen the earth
 Give to ten thousand spectres birth,
 Than venture to awake to flame
 The deadly wrath of Risingham.
 Submiss he answered,—“Mortham’s mind,
 Thou know’st, to joy was ill inclined.
 In youth, ’tis said, a gallant free,

A lusty reveller was he ;
But since returned from over sea,
A sullen and a silent mood
Hath numbed the current of his blood.
Hence he refused each kindly call
To Rokeby's hospitable hall,
And our stout knight, at dawn of morn
Who loved to hear the bugle-horn,
Nor less, when eve his oaks embrowned,
To see the ruddy cup go round,
Took umbrage that a friend so near
Refused to share his chase and cheer ;
Thus did the kindred barons jar,
Ere they divided in the war.
Yet, trust me, friend, Matilda fair
Of Mortham's wealth is destined heir."—

XXII.

"Destined to her! to yon slight maid!
The prize my life had well-nigh paid,
When 'gainst Laroche, by Cayo's wave
I fought, my patron's wealth to save!—
Denzil, I knew him long, yet ne'er
Knew him that joyous cavalier;
Whom youthful friends and early fame
Called soul of gallantry and game.
A moody man, he sought our crew,
Desperate and dark, whom no one knew ;
And rose, as men with us must rise,
By scorning life and all its ties.
On each adventure rash he roved,
As danger for itself he loved ;
On his sad brow nor mirth nor wine
Could e'er one wrinkled knot untwine ;
Ill was the omen if he smiled,
For 'twas in peril stern and wild ;
But when he laughed, each luckless mate
Might hold our fortune desperate.
Foremost he fought in every broil,
Then scornful turned him from the spoil ;
Nay, often strove to bar the way
Between his comrades and their prey ;
Preaching, even then, to such as we,

Hot with our dear-bought victory,
Of mercy and humanity.

XXIII.

“I loved him well: his fearless part,
His gallant leading, won my heart.
And after each victorious fight,
'Twas I that wrangled for his right,
Redeemed his portion of the prey
That greedier mates had torn away:
In field and storm thrice saved his life,
And once amid our comrades' strife.—
Yes, I have loved thee! Well hath proved
My toil, my danger, how I loved!
Yet will I mourn no more thy fate,
Ingrate in life, in death ingrate.
Rise if thou canst!” he looked around,
And sternly stamped upon the ground—
“Rise, with thy bearing proud and high,
Even as this morn it met mine eye,
And give me, if thou darest, the lie!”
He paused—then, calm and passion-freed,
Bade Denzil with his tale proceed.

XXIV.

“Bertram, to thee I need not tell,
What thou hast cause to wot so well,
How Superstition's nets were twined
Around the Lord of Mortham's mind!
But since he drove thee from his tower,
A maid he found in Greta's bower,
Whose speech, like David's harp, had sway,
To charm his evil fiend away.
I know not if her features moved
Remembrance of the wife he loved;
But he would gaze upon her eye,
Till his mood softened to a sigh.
He, whom no living mortal sought
To question of his secret thought,
Now every thought and care confessed
To his fair niece's faithful breast;
Nor was there aught of rich and rare,
In earth, in ocean, or in air,

But it must deck Matilda's hair.
Her love still bound him unto life;
But then awoke the civil strife,
And menials bore, by his commands,
Three coffers, with their iron bands,
From Mortham's vault, at midnight deep,
To her lone bower in Rokeby-Keep,
Ponderous with gold and plate of pride—
His gift, if he in battle died.”—

XXV.

“Then Denzil, as I guess, lays train,
These iron-banded chests to gain;
Else, wherefore should he hover here,
Where many a peril waits him near,
For all his feats of war and peace,
For plundered boors, and harts of grease?
Since through the hamlets as he fared,
What hearth has Guy's marauding spared,
Or where the chase that hath not rung
With Denzil's bow, at midnight strung?”—
“I hold my wont—my rangers go,
Even now, to track a milk-white doe.
By Rokeby-hall she takes her lair,
In Greta wood she harbors fair,
And when my huntsman marks her way,
What think'st thou, Bertram, of the prey?
Were Rokeby's daughter in our power,
We rate her ransom at her dower.”

XXVI.

“'Tis well!—there's vengeance in the thought:
Matilda is by Wilfrid sought;
And hot-brained Redmond, too, 'tis said,
Pays lover's homage to the maid.
Bertram she scorned—If met by chance,
She turned from me her shuddering glance,
Like a nice dame, that will not brook
On what she hates and loathes to look:
She told to Mortham she could ne'er
Behold me without secret fear,
Foreboding evil:—She may rue
To find her prophecy fall true!—

The war has weeded Rokeby's train,
 Few followers in his halls remain;
 If thy scheme miss, then, brief and bold,
 We are enow to storm the hold;
 Bear off the plunder, and the dame,
 And leave the castle all in flame."—

XXVII.

"Still art thou Valor's venturous son!
 Yet ponder first the risk to run:
 The menials of the castle, true,
 And stubborn to their charge, though few;
 The wall to scale—the moat to cross—
 The wicket-grate—the inner fosse"—
 "Fool! if we blench for toys like these,
 On what fair guerdon can we seize?
 Our hardest venture, to explore
 Some wretched peasant's fenceless door,
 And the best prize we bear away,
 The earnings of his sordid day."—
 "A while thy hasty taunt forbear:
 In sight of road more sure and fair,
 Thou wouldst not choose, in blindfold wrath,
 Or wantonness, a desperate path?
 List, then;—for vantage or assault,
 From gilded vane to dungeon vault,
 Each pass of Rokeby-house I know:
 There is one postern, dark and low,
 That issues at a secret spot,
 By most neglected or forgot.
 Now, could a spial of our train
 On fair pretext admittance gain,
 That sally-port might be unbarred:
 Then, vain were battlement and ward!"

XXVIII.

"Now speak'st thou well.—to me the same,
 If force or art shall urge the game;
 Indifferent, if like fox I wind,
 Or spring like tiger on the hind.—
 But hark! our merry-men so gay
 Troll forth another roundelay."—

SONG.

“A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine!
A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln-green,—
No more of me you knew,
My love!
No more of me you knew.
“This morn is merry June, I trow,
The rose is budding fain;
But she shall bloom in winter snow,
Ere we two meet again.”
He turned his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore,
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
Said, “Adieu for evermore,
My love!
And adieu for evermore.”—

XXIX.

“What youth is this, your band among,
The best for minstrelsy and song?
In his wild notes seem aptly met
A strain of pleasure and regret.”—
“Edmond of Winston is his name;
The hamlet sounded with the fame
Of early hopes his childhood gave,—
Now centered all in Brignall cave!
I watch him well—his wayward course
Shows oft a tincture of remorse.
Some early love-shaft grazed his heart,
And oft the scar will ache and smart.
Yet is he useful;—of the rest,
By fits, the darling and the jest,
His harp, his story, and his lay,
Oft aid the idle hours away:
When unemployed, each fiery mate
Is ripe for mutinous debate.
He tuned his strings e'en now—again
He wakes them, with a blither strain.

XXX,

SONG.

ALLEN-A-DALE.

Allen-a-Dale has no fagot for burning,
 Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,
 Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,
 Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the winning.
 Come, read me my riddle! come, hearken my tale!
 And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,
 And he views his domains upon Arkindale side.
 The mere for his net, and the land for his game,
 The chase for the wild, and the park for the tame;
 Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the vale,
 Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-Dale!

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
 Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be as bright;
 Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
 Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word;
 And the best of our nobles his bonnet will vail,
 Who at Rere-cross* on Stanmore meets Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
 The mother, she asked of his household and home:
 "Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on the hill,
 My hall," quoth bold Allen, "shows gallanter still:
 'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent so pale,
 And with all its bright spangles!" said Allen-a-Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was stone;
 They lifted the latch, and they bade him be gone;
 But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their cry:
 He had laughed on the lass with his bonny black eye,
 And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
 And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-Dale!

XXXI.

"Thou see'st that, whether sad or gay,
 Love mingles ever in his lay.

* This is a fragment of an old cross, with its pediment, surrounded by an intrenchment, upon the very summit of the waste ridge of Stanmore, near a small house of entertainment called the Spittal.

But when his boyish wayward fit
 Is o'er, he hath address and wit ;
 O! 'tis a brain of fire, can ape
 Each dialect, each various shape."—
 "Nay, then, to aid thy project, Guy—
 Soft! who comes here?"—"My trusty spy.
 Speak, Hamlin! hast thou lodged our deer?"—
 "I have—but two fair stags are near.
 I watched her, as she slowly strayed
 From Egliston up Thorsgill glade ;
 But Wilfrid Wycliffe sought her side,
 And then young Redmond, in his pride,
 Shot down to meet them on their way :
 Much, as it seemed, was theirs to say :
 There's time to pitch both toil and net
 Before their path be homeward set."
 A hurried and a whispered speech
 Did Bertram's will to Denzil teach ;
 Who, turning to the robber band,
 Bade four, the bravest, take the brand.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

WHEN Denmark's raven soared on high,
 Triumphant through Northumbrian sky,*
 Till, hovering near, her fatal croak
 Bade Reged's Britons dread the yoke,
 And the broad shadow of her wing
 Blackened each cataract and spring,
 Where Tees in tumult leaves his source,

* About the year of God, 866, the Danes, under their celebrated leaders Ingnar (more properly Agnar) and Hubba, sons, it is said, of the still more celebrated Regnar Lodbrog, invaded Northumberland, bringing with them the magical standard, so often mentioned in poetry, called REAFEN, or Raunfan, from its bearing the figure of a raven. They renewed and extended their incursions, and began to colonize, establishing a kind of capital at York, from which they spread their conquests and incursions in every direction.

Thundering o'er Caldron and High-Force;
 Beneath the shade the Northmen came,
 Fixed on each vale a Runic name,
 Reared high their altars' rugged stone,
 And gave their Gods the land they won.
 Then, Balder, one bleak garth was thine,
 And one sweet brooklet's silver line,
 And Woden's Croft did title gain
 From the stern Father of the Slain;
 But to the Monarch of the Mace,
 That held in fight the foremost place,
 To Odin's son, and Sifa's spouse,
 Near Stratforth high they paid their vows,
 Remembered Thor's victorious fame,
 And gave the dell the Thunderer's name.

II.

Yet Scald or Kemper erred, I ween,
 Who gave that soft and quiet scene,
 With all its varied light and shade,
 And every little sunny glade,
 And the blithe brook that strolls along
 Its pebbled bed with summer song,
 To the grim God of blood and scar,
 The grisly King of Northern War.
 O, better were its banks assigned
 To spirits of a gentler kind!
 For where the thicket-groups recede,
 And the rath primrose decks the mead,
 The velvet grass seems carpet meet
 For the light fairies' lively feet.
 Yon tufted knoll, with daisies strown
 Might make proud Oberon a throne,
 While, hidden in the thicket nigh,
 Puck should brood o'er his frolic sly;
 And where profuse the wood-vetch clings
 Round ash and elm, in verdant rings,
 Its pale and azure-pencilled flower
 Should canopy Titania's bower.

III.

Here rise no cliffs the vale to shade;
 But, skirting every sunny glade,

In fair variety of green
 The woodland lends its silvan screen.
 Hoary, yet haughty, frowns the oak,
 Its boughs by weight of ages broke ;
 And towers erect, in sable spire,
 The pine-tree scathed by lightning-fire ;
 The drooping ash and birch, between,
 Hang their fair tresses o'er the green,
 And all beneath, at random grow
 Each coppice dwarf of varied show,
 Or, round the stems profusely twined,
 Fling summer odors on the wind.
 Such varied group Urbino's hand
 Round Him of Tarsus nobly planned,
 What time he bade proud Athens own
 On Mars's Mount the God Unknown !
 Then gray Philosophy stood nigh,
 Though bent by age, in spirit high :
 There rose the scar-seamed veteran's spear,
 There Grecian beauty bent to hear,
 While Childhood at her foot was placed,
 Or clung delighted to her waist.

IV.

"And rest we here," Matilda said,
 And sate her in the varying shade.
 "Chance-met, we well may steal an hour.
 To friendship due from fortune's power.
 Thou, Wilfrid, ever kind, must lend
 Thy counsel to thy sister-friend ;
 And, Redmond, thou, at my behest,
 No farther urge thy desperate 'quest.
 For to my care a charge is left,
 Dangerous to one of aid bereft,
 Well-nigh an orphan, and alone,
 Captive her sire, her house o'erthrown."
 Wilfrid, with wonted kindness graced,
 Beside her on the turf she placed ;
 Then paused, with downcast look and eye,
 Nor bade young Redmond seat him nigh.
 Her conscious diffidence he saw,
 Drew backward, as in modest awe,

And sate a little space removed,
Unmarked to gaze on her he loved.

v.

Wreathed in its dark-brown rings, her hair
Half hid Matilda's forehead fair :
Half hid, and half revealed to view,
Her full dark eye of hazel hue.
The rose, with faint and feeble streak,
So slightly tinged the maiden's cheek,
That you had said her hue was pale ;
But if she faced the summer gale,
Or spoke, or sung, or quicker moved,
Or heard the praise of those she loved,
Or when of interest was expressed
Aught that waked feeling in her breast,
The mantling blood in ready play
Rivalled the blush of rising day.
There was a soft and pensive grace,
A cast of thought upon her face,
That suited well the forehead high,
The eyelash dark, and downcast eye ;
The mild expression spoke a mind
In duty firm, composed, resigned ;—
'Tis that which Roman art has given,
To mark their maiden Queen of Heaven.
In hours of sport, that mood gave way
To Fancy's light and frolic play ;
And when the dance, or tale, or song,
In harmless mirth sped time along,
Full oft her doting sire would call
His Maud the merriest of them all.
But days of war, and civil crime,
Allowed but ill such festal time,
And her soft pensiveness of brow
Had deepened into sadness now.
In Marston field her father ta'en,
Her friends dispersed, brave Mortham slain,
While every ill her soul foretold,
From Oswald's thirst of power and gold,
And boding thoughts that she must part,
With a soft vision of her heart,—

All lowered around the lovely maid,
To darken her dejection's shade.

VI.

Who has not heard—while Erin yet
Strove 'gainst the Saxon's iron bit—
Who has not heard how brave O'Neale
In English blood imbrued his steel,
Against St. George's cross blazed high
The banners of his Tanistry,
To fiery Essex gave the foil,
And reigned a prince on Ulster's soil?
But chief arose his victor pride,
When that brave Marshal fought and died,*
And Avon-Duff to ocean bore
His billows red with Saxon gore.
'Twas first in that disastrous fight,
Rokeby and Mortham proved their might.
There had they fallen among the rest,
But pity touched a chieftain's breast;
The Tanist he to great O'Neale;†
He checked his followers' bloody zeal,
To quarter took the kinsmen bold,
And bore them to his mountain-hold,
Gave them each silvan joy to know
Slieve-Donard's cliffs and woods could show,
Shared with them Erin's festal cheer,

* The chief victory which Tyrone obtained over the English was in a battle fought near Blackwater, while he besieged a fort garrisoned by the English, which commanded the passes into his country. He is said to have entertained a personal animosity against the knight-marshal, Sir Henry Bagnal, whom he accused of detaining the letters which he sent to Queen Elizabeth, explanatory of his conduct, and offering terms of submission. The river, called by the English, Blackwater, is termed in Irish, Avon-Duff, which has the same signification.

† When an Irish chief died, it was not the eldest son who succeeded to his authority, but a captain elected for the occasion; after whom the eldest son was generally nominated the Tanist, that is, the successor to the captain. The Tanist, therefore, of O'Neale, was the heir apparent of his power. This kind of succession appears also to have regulated, in very remote times, the succession to the crown of Scotland. It would have been imprudent, if not impossible, to have asserted a minor's right of succession in those stormy days, when the principles of policy were the mere impulses of selfishness and violence.

Showed them the chase of wolf and deer,
 And, when a fitting time was come,
 Safe and unransomed sent them home,
 Loaded with many a gift to prove
 A generous foe's respect and love.

VII.

Years speed away. On Rokeby's head
 Some touch of early snow was shed;
 Calm he enjoyed, by Greta's wave,
 The peace which James the Peaceful gave,
 While Mortham, far beyond the main,
 Waged his fierce wars on Indian Spain.—
 It chanced upon a wintry night,
 That whitened Stanmore's stormy heig¹ †,
 The chase was o'er, the stag was killed,
 In Rokeby-hall the cups were filled,
 And by the huge stone chimney sate
 The Knight in hospitable state.
 Moonless the sky, the hour was late,
 When a loud summons shook the gate,
 And sore for entrance and for aid
 A voice of foreign accent prayed.
 The porter answered to the call,
 And instant rushed into the hall
 A man, whose aspect and attire
 Startled the circle by the fire.

VIII.

His plaited hair in elf-locks spread*
 Around his bare and matted head;
 On leg and thigh, close-stretched and trim,
 His vesture showed the sinewy limb;
 In saffron dyed, a linen vest
 Was frequent folded round his breast;
 A mantle long and loose he wore,
 Shaggy with ice, and stained with gore,

* It would seem, that the ancient Irish dress was (the bonnet excepted) very similar to that of the Scottish Highlanders. The want of a covering on the head was supplied by the mode of plaiting and arranging their hair, which was called the *glibbe*. These glibbes, according to Spenser, were fit marks for a thief, since, when he wished to disguise himself, he could either cut it off entirely, or so pull it over his eyes as to render it very hard to recognize him.

He clasped a burden to his heart,
And, resting on a knotted dart,
The snow from hair and beard he shook,
And round him gazed with wildered look.
Then up the hall, with staggering pace,
He hastened by the blaze to place,
Half lifeless from the bitter air,
His load, a Boy of beauty rare.
To Rokeby, next, he louted low,
Then stood erect his tale to show,
With wild majestic port and tone,
Like envoy of some barbarous throne.*
“Sir Richard, Lord of Rokeby, hear!
Turlough O’Neale salutes thee dear;
He graces thee, and to thy care
Young Redmond gives, his grandson fair.
He bids thee breed him as thy son,
For Turlough’s days of joy are done;
And other lords have seized his land,
And faint and feeble is his hand;
And all the glory of Tyrone
Is like a morning vapor flown.
To bind the duty on thy soul,
He bids thee think on Erin’s bowl!
If any wrong the young O’Neale,
He bids thee think of Erin’s steel.
To Mortham first this charge was due,
But, in his absence, honors you.—
Now is my master’s message by,
And Ferraight will contented die.”

IX.

His look grew fixed, his cheek grew pale,
He sunk when he had told his tale;
For, hid beneath his mantle wide,
A mortal wound was in his side.
Vain was all aid—in terror wild,
And sorrow, screamed the orphan child.
Poor Ferraight raised his wistful eyes,
And faintly strove to soothe his cries;

* The Irish chiefs, in their intercourse with the English, and with each other, were wont to assume the language and style of independent royalty.

All reckless of his dying pain,
 He blest, and blest him o'er again!
 And kissed the little hands outspread,
 And kissed and crossed the infant head,
 And, in his native tongue and phrase,
 Prayed to each saint to watch his days;
 Then all his strength together drew,
 The charge to Rokeby to renew.
 When half was faltered from his breast,
 And half by dying sounds expressed,
 "Bless thee, O'Neale!" he faintly said,
 And thus the faithful spirit fled.

X.

'Twas long ere soothing might prevail
 Upon the child to end the tale:
 And then he said, that from his home
 His grandsire had been forced to roam,
 Which had not been if Redmond's hand
 Had but had strength to draw the brand,
 The brand of Lenaugh More the Red,
 That hung beside the gray wolf's head.—
 'Twas from his broken phrase descried,
 His foster-father was his guide,*
 Who, in his charge, from Ulster bore
 Letters, and gifts a goodly store;
 But ruffians met them in the wood,
 Ferraught in battle boldly stood,
 Till wounded and o'erpowered at length,
 And stripped of all, his failing strength
 Just bore him here—and then the child
 Renewed again his moaning wild.

XI.

The tear, down childhood's cheek that flows,
 Is like the dew-drop on the rose;
 When next the summer breeze comes by,
 And waves the bush, the flower is dry.
 Won by their care, the orphan child
 Soon on his new protector smiled,

* There was no tie more sacred among the Irish than that which connected the foster-father, as well as the nurse herself, with the child they brought up.

With dimpled cheek and eye so fair,
Through his thick curls of flaxen hair.
But blithest laughed that cheek and eye,
When Rokeby's little maid was nigh;
'Twas his, with elder brother's pride,
Matilda's tottering steps to guide;
His native lays in Irish tongue,
To soothe her infant ear he sung,
And primrose twined with daisy fair,
To form a chaplet for her hair.
By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's strand,
The children still were hand and hand,
And good Sir Richard smiling eyed
The early knot so kindly tied.

XII.

But summer months bring wilding shoot
From bud to bloom, from bloom to fruit;
And years draw on our human span,
From child to boy, from boy to man;
And soon in Rokeby's woods is seen
A gallant boy in hunter's green.
He loves to wake the felon boar,
In his dark haunt on Greta's shore,
And loves, against the deer so dun,
To draw the shaft, or lift the gun:
Yet more he loves, in autumn prime,
The hazel's spreading boughs to climb,
And down its clustered stores to hail,
Where young Matilda holds her veil.
And she, whose veil receives the shower,
Is altered too, and knows her power;
Assumes a monitress's pride,
Her Redmond's dangerous sports to chide;
Yet listens still to hear him tell
How the grim wild-boar fought and fell,
How at his fall the bugle rung,
Till rock and greenwood answer flung;
Then blesses her, that man can find
A pastime of such savage kind!

XIII.

But Redmond knew to weave his tale
So well with praise of wood and dale,

And knew so well each point to trace,
 Gives living interest to the chase,
 And knew so well o'er all to throw
 His spirit's wild romantic glow.
 That, while she blamed, and while she feared,
 She loved each venturous tale she heard.
 Oft, too, when drifted snow and rain
 To bower and hall their steps restrain,
 Together they explored the page
 Of glowing bard or gifted sage ;
 Oft placed the evening fire beside,
 The minstrel art alternate tried,
 While gladsome harp and lively lay
 Bade winter night flit fast away :
 Thus from their childhood blending still
 Their sport, their study, and their skill,
 A union of the soul they prove,
 But must not think that it was love.
 But though they dared not, envious Fame
 Soon dared to give that union name ;
 And when so often, side by side,
 From year to year the pair she eyed,
 She sometimes blamed the good old Knight,
 As dull of ear and dim of sight,
 Sometimes his purpose would declare,
 That young O'Neale should wed his heir.

XIV.

The suit of Wilfrid rent disguise
 And bandage from the lovers' eyes ;
 'Twas plain that Oswald, for his son,
 Had Rokeby's favor well-nigh won.
 Now must they meet with change of cheer,
 With mutual looks of shame and fear ;
 Now must Matilda stray apart,
 To school her disobedient heart :
 And Redmond now alone must rue
 The love he never can subdue.
 But factions rose, and Rokeby sware,
 No rebel's son should wed his heir ;
 And Redmond, nurtured while a child
 In many a bard's traditions wild,
 Now sought the lonely wood or stream

To cherish there a happier dream,
 Of maiden won by sword or lance,
 As in the regions of romance ;
 And count the heroes of his line,
 Great Nial of the Pledges Nine,*
 Shane-Dymast † wild, and Geraldine, ‡
 And Connan-more, who vowed his race
 Forever to the fight and chase,
 And cursed him, of his lineage born,
 Should sheathe the sword to reap the corn,
 Or leave the mountain and the wold,
 To shroud himself in castled hold.
 From such examples hope he drew,
 And brightened as the trumpet blew.

XV.

If brides were won by heart and blade,
 Redmond had both his cause to aid,
 And all besides of nurture rare
 That might beseem a baron's heir.
 Turlough O'Neale, in Erin's strife,
 On Rokeby's Lord bestowed his life,
 And well did Rokeby's generous Knight
 Young Redmond for the deed requite.
 Nor was his liberal care and cost
 Upon the gallant stripling lost :
 Seek the North Riding broad and wide,
 Like Redmond none could steed bestride.
 From Tynemouth search to Cumberland,
 Like Redmond none could wield a brand ;
 And then, of humor kind and free,
 And bearing him to each degree
 With frank and fearless courtesy,

* Neal Naighvallach, or Of the Nine Hostages, is said to have been monarch of all Ireland, during the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century.

† This Shane-Dymas, or John the Wanton, held the title and power of O'Neale in the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign, against whom he rebelled repeatedly.

‡ The O'Neales were closely allied with this powerful and warlike family. This Con-More cursed any of his posterity who should learn the English language, sow corn, or build houses, so as to invite the English to settle in their country.

There never youth was formed to steal
Upon the heart like brave O'Neale.

XVI.

Sir Richard loved him as his son ;
And when the days of peace were done,
And to the gales of war he gave
The banner of his sires to wave,
Redmond, distinguished by his care,
He chose that honored flag to bear,
And named his page, the next degree
In that old time to chivalry.*
In five pitched fields he well maintained
The honored place his worth obtained,
And high was Redmond's youthful name
Blazed in the roll of martial fame.
Had fortune smiled on Marston fight,
The eve had seen him dubbed a knight ;
Twice, 'mid the battle's doubtful strife,
Of Rokeby's Lord he saved the life,
But when he saw him prisoner made,
He kissed and then resigned his blade,
And yielded him an easy prey
To those who led the Knight away ;
Resolved Matilda's sire should prove,
In prison, as in fight, his love.

XVII.

When lovers meet in adverse hour,
'Tis like a sun-glimpse through a shower,
A watery ray, an instant seen,
The darkly closing clouds between.
As Redmond on the turf reclined,
The past and present filled his mind :
"It was not thus," Affection said,
"I dreamed of my return, dear maid !

Originally, the order of chivalry embraced three ranks: 1. The Page, 2. The Squire; 3. The Knight. But, before the reign of Charles I., the custom of serving as a squire had fallen into disuse, though the order of the page was still, to a certain degree, in observance. This state of servitude was so far from inferring any thing degrading, that it was considered as the regular school for acquiring every quality necessary for future distinction.

Not thus, when from thy trembling hand,
I took the banner and the brand,
When round me as the bugles blew,
Their blades three hundred warriors drew,
And, while the standard I unrolled,
Clashed their bright arms, with clamor bold!
Where is that banner now?—its pride
Lies 'whelmed in Ouse's sullen tide!
Where now those warriors?—in their gore,
They cumber Marston's dismal moor;
And what avails a useless brand,
Held by a captive's shackled hand,
That only would his life retain,
To aid thy sire to bear his chain!"
Thus Redmond to himself apart;
Nor lighter was his rival's heart;
For Wilfrid, while his generous soul
Disdained to profit by control,
By many a sign could mark too plain,
Save with such aid, his hopes were vain.—
But now Matilda's accents stole
On the dark visions of their soul,
And bade their mournful musing fly,
Like mist before the zephyr's sigh.

XVIII.

"I need not to my friends recall,
How Mortham shunned my father's hall;
A man of silence and of woe,
Yet ever anxious to bestow
On my poor self whate'er could prove
A kinsman's confidence and love.
My feeble aid could sometimes chase
The clouds of sorrow for a space;
But oftener, fixed beyond my power,
I marked his deep despondence lower.
One dismal cause, by all unguessed,
His fearful confidence confessed,
And twice it was my hap to see
Examples of that agony.
Which for a season can o'erstrain
And wreck the structure of the brain.
He had the awful power to know

The approaching mental overthrow,
 And while his mind had courage yet
 To struggle with the dreadful fit,
 The victim writhed against its throes,
 Like wretch beneath a murderer's blows.
 This malady, I well could mark,
 Sprung from some direful cause and dark;
 But still he kept its source concealed,
 Till arming for the civil field;
 Then in my charge he bade me hold
 A treasure huge of gems and gold,
 With this disjointed dismal scroll,
 That tells the secret of his soul,
 In such wild words as oft betray
 A mind by anguish forced astray."

XIX.

MORTHAM'S HISTORY.

"Matilda! thou hast seen me start,
 As if a dagger thrilled my heart,
 When it has happ'd some casual phrase
 Waked memory of my former days.
 *Believe that few can backward cast
 Their thoughts with pleasure on the past;
 But I!—my youth was rash and vain,
 And blood and rage my manhood stain,
 And my gray hairs must now descend
 To my cold grave without a friend!
 E'en thou, Matilda, wilt disown
 Thy kinsman, when his guilt is known,
 And must I lift the bloody veil,
 That hides my dark and fatal tale!
 I must—I will—Pale phantom, cease!
 Leave me one little hour in peace!
 Thus haunted, think'st thou I have skill,
 Thine own commission to fulfil?
 Or, while thou point'st with gesture fierce,
 Thy blighted cheek, thy bloody hearse,
 How can I paint thee as thou wert,
 So fair in face, so warm in heart!—

XX.

"Yes, she was fair!—Matilda, thou
 Hast a soft sadness on thy brow;
 But hers was like the sunny glow,
 That laughs on earth and all below!
 We wedded secret—there was need—
 Differing in country and in creed;
 And when to Mortham's tower she came,
 We mentioned not her race and name,
 Until thy sire, who fought afar,
 Should turn him home from foreign war,
 On whose kind influence we relied,
 To soothe her father's ire and pride.
 Few months we lived retired, unknown,
 To all but one dear friend alone,
 One darling friend—I spare his shame,
 I will not write the villain's name!
 My trespasses I might forget,
 And sue in vengeance for the debt
 Due by a brother worm to me,
 Ungrateful to God's clemency,
 That spared me penitential time,
 Nor cut me off amid my crime.—

XXI.

"A kindly smile to all she lent,
 But on her husband's friend 'twas bent
 So kind, that from its harmless glee,
 The wretch misconstrued villainy.
 Repulsed in his presumptuous love,
 A 'vengeful snare the traitor wove.
 Alone we sat—the flask had flowed,
 My blood with heat unwonted glowed,
 When through the alleyed walk we spied
 With hurried step my Edith glide,
 Cowering beneath the verdant screen,
 As one unwilling to be seen.
 Words cannot paint the fiendish smile
 That curled the traitor's cheek the while.
 Fiercely I questioned of the cause;
 He made a cold and artful pause,
 Then prayed it might not chafe my mood—

'There was a gallant in the wood!'—
 We had been shooting at the deer:
 My cross-bow (evil chance!) was near:
 That ready weapon of my wrath
 I caught, and, hastening up the path,
 In the yew grove my wife I found:
 A stranger's arms her neck had bound!
 I marked his heart—the bow I drew—
 I loosed the shaft—'twas more than true!
 I found my Edith's dying charms
 Locked in her murdered brother's arms!
 He came in secret to inquire
 Her state, and reconcile her sire.

XXII.

"All fled my rage—the villain first,
 Whose craft my jealousy had nursed;
 He sought in far and foreign clime
 To 'scape the vengeance of his crime.
 The manner of the slaughter done
 Was known to few, my guilt to none;
 Some tale my faithful steward framed—
 I know not what—of shaft misaimed;
 And even from those the act who knew,
 He hid the hand from which it flew.
 Untouched by human laws I stood,
 But God had heard the cry of blood!
 There is a blank upon my mind,
 A fearful vision ill-defined,
 Of raving till my flesh was torn,
 Of dungeon-bolts and fetters worn—
 And when I waked to woe more mild,
 And questioned of my infant child—
 (Have I not written, that she bare
 A boy, like summer morning fair?)—
 With looks confused my menials tell,
 That armed men in Mortham dell
 Beset the nurse's evening way,
 And bore her, with her charge, away.
 My faithless friend, and none but he,
 Could profit by this villainy;
 Him then, I sought, with purpose dread,
 Of treble vengeance on his head!

He 'scaped me—but my bosom's wound
Some faint relief from wandering found;
And over distant land and sea,
I bore my load of misery.

XXIII.

"'Twas then that fate my footsteps led
Among a daring crew and dread,
With whom full oft my hated life
I ventured in such desperate strife,
That e'en my fierce associates saw
My frantic deeds with doubt and awe.
Much then I learned, and much can show,
Of human guilt and human woe,
Yet ne'er have, in my wanderings, known
A wretch, whose sorrows matched my own!—
It chanced, that after battle fray,
Upon the bloody field we lay;
The yellow moon her lustre shed
Upon the wounded and the dead,
While, sense in toil and wassail drowned,
My ruffian comrades slept around,
There came a voice—its silver tone
Was soft, Matilda, as thine own—
'Ah! wretch!' it said, 'what mak'st thou here,
While unavenged my bloody bier,
While unprotected lives mine heir,
Without a father's name and care?'

XXIV.

"I heard—obeyed—and homeward drew;
The fiercest of our desperate crew
I brought at time of need to aid
My purposed vengeance, long delayed.
But, humble be my thanks to Heaven,
That better hopes and thoughts has given,
And by our Lord's dear prayer has taught,
Mercy by mercy must be bought!—
Let me in misery rejoice—
I've seen his face—I've heard his voice—
I claimed of him my only child—
As he disowned the theft, he smiled!
That very calm and callous look,

That fiendish sneer his visage took,
 As when he said, in scornful mood,
 'There is a gallant in the wood!'—
 I did not slay him as he stood—
 All praise be to my Maker given!
 Long sufferance is one path to heaven.'

XXV.

Thus far the woful tale was heard,
 When something in the thicket stirred.
 Up Redmond sprung; the villain Guy,
 (For he it was that lurked so nigh,)
 Drew back—he durst not cross his steel
 A moment's space with brave O'Neale,
 For all the treasured gold that rests
 In Mortham's iron-banded chests.
 Redmond resumed his seat—he said,
 Some roe was rustling in the shade.
 Bertram laughed grimly, when he saw
 His timorous comrade backward draw.
 "A trusty mate art thou, to feai
 A single arm, and aid so near!
 Yet have I seen thee mark a deer.
 Give me my carabine—I'll show
 An art that thou wilt gladly know,
 How thou mayst safely quell a foe."

XXVI.

On hands and knees fierce Bertram drew
 The spreading birch and hazels through,
 Till he had Redmond full in view;
 The gun he levelled—Mark like this
 Was Bertram never known to miss,
 When fair opposed to aim there sate
 An object of his mortal hate.
 That day young Redmond's death had seen,
 But twice Matilda came between
 The carabine and Redmond's breast,
 Just ere the spring his finger pressed.
 A deadly oath the ruffian swore,
 But yet his fell design forebore:
 "It ne'er," he muttered, "shall be said,

That thus I scathed thee, haughty maid!"
Then moved to seek more open aim,
When to his side Guy Denzil came:
"Bertram, forbear!—we are undone
Forever, if thou fire the gun.
By all the fiends, an armed force
Descends the dell, of foot and horse:
We perish if they hear a shot.—
Madman! we have a safer plot—
Nay, friend, be ruled, and bear thee back!
Behold, down yonder hollow track,
The warlike leader of the band
Comes, with his broadsword in his hand."
Bertram looked up; he saw, he knew
That Denzil's fears had counselled true,
Then cursed his fortune and withdrew,
Threaded the woodlands undescried,
And gained the cave on Greta side.

XXVII.

They whom dark Bertram, in his wrath,
Doomed to captivity or death,
Their thoughts to one sad subject lent,
Saw not nor heard the ambushment.
Heedless and unconcerned they sate,
While on the very verge of fate;
Heedless and unconcerned remained,
When Heaven the murderer's arm restrained;
As ships drift darkling down the tide,
Nor see the shelves o'er which they glide,
Uninterrupted thus they heard
What Mortham's closing tale declared.
He spoke of wealth as of a load,
By Fortune on a wretch bestowed,
In bitter mockery of hate,
His cureless woes to aggravate;
But yet he prayed Matilda's care
Might save that treasure for his heir—
His Edith's son—for still he raved
As confident his life was saved:
In frequent vision, he averred,
He saw his face, his voice he heard;
Then argued calm—had murder been,

The blood, the corpses, had been seen ;
 Some had pretended, too, to mark
 On Windermere a stranger bark,
 Whose crew, with jealous care, yet mild,
 Guarded a female and a child.
 While these faint proofs he told and pressed,
 Hope seemed to kindle in his breast ;
 Though inconsistent, vague, and vain,
 It warped his judgment, and his brain.

XXVIII.

These solemn words his story close :—
 “ Heaven witness for me, that I chose
 My part in this sad civil fight,
 Moved by no cause but England’s right.
 My country’s groans have bid me draw
 My sword for gospel and the law ;—
 These righted, I fling arms aside,
 And seek my son through Europe wide.
 My wealth, on which a kinsman nigh
 Already casts a grasping eye,
 With thee may unsuspected lie.
 When of my death Matilda hears,
 Let her retain her trust three years ;
 If none, from me, the treasure claim,
 Perished is Mortham’s race and name.
 Then let it leave her generous hand,
 And flow in bounty o’er the land ;
 Soften the wounded prisoner’s lot,
 Rebuild the peasant’s ruined cot :
 So spoils, acquired by fight afar,
 Shall mitigate domestic war.”

XXIX.

The generous youths, who well had known,
 Of Mortham’s mind the powerful tone,
 To that high mind, by sorrow swerved,
 Gave sympathy his woes deserved ;
 But Wilfrid chief, who saw revealed
 Why Mortham wished his life concealed,
 In secret, doubtless, to pursue
 The schemes his wildered fancy drew.
 Thoughtful he heard Matilda tell,

That she would share her father's cell.
His partner of captivity,
Where'er his prison-house should be,
Yet grieved to think that Rokeby-hall,
Dismantled, and forsook by all,
Open to rapine and to stealth,
Had now no safeguard for the wealth
Intrusted by her kinsman kind,
And for such noble use designed.
"Was Barnard Castle then her choice,"
Wilfrid inquired with hasty voice,
"Since there the victor's laws ordain,
Her father must a space remain?"
A fluttered hope his accents shook,
A fluttered joy was in his look.
Matilda hastened to reply,
For anger flashed in Redmond's eye;—
"Duty," she said, with gentle grace,
"Kind Wilfrid, has no choice of place;
Else had I for my sire assigned
Prison less galling to his mind,
Than that his wild-wood haunts which sees,
And hears the murmurs of the Tees,
Recalling thus, with every glance,
What captive's sorrow can enhance;
But where those woes are highest, there
Needs Rokeby most his daughter's care."

XXX.

He felt the kindly check she gave,
And stood abashed—then answered grave:—
"I sought thy purpose, noble maid,
Thy doubts to clear, thy schemes to aid.
I have beneath mine own command,
So wills my sire, a gallant band,
And well could send some horseman wight,
To bear the treasure forth by night,
And so bestow it as you deem
In these ill days may safest seem."—
"Thanks, gentle Wilfrid, thanks," she said:
"O, be it not one day delayed!
And, more, thy sister-friend to aid,
Be thou thyself content to hold,

In thine own keeping, Mortham's gold,
 Safest with thee."—While thus she spoke,
 Armed soldiers on their converse broke,
 The same of whose approach afraid,
 The ruffians left their ambuscade.
 Their chief to Wilfrid bended low,
 Then looked around as for a foe.
 "What mean'st thou, friend?" young Wycliffe said;
 "Why thus in arms beset the glade?"—
 "That would I gladly learn from you,
 For up my squadron as I drew,
 To exercise our martial game
 Upon the moor of Barninghame,
 A stranger told you were waylaid,
 Surrounded, and to death betrayed.
 He had a leader's voice I ween,
 A falcon glance, a warrior's mien.
 He bade me bring you instant aid;
 I doubted not, and I obeyed."

XXXI.

Wilfrid changed color, and amazed,
 Turned short, and on the speaker gazed;
 While Redmond every thicket round
 Tracked earnest as a questing hound,
 And Denzil's carbine he found;
 Sure evidence, by which they knew
 The warning was as kind as true.
 Wisest it seemed, with cautious speed
 To leave the dell. It was agreed,
 That Redmond, with Matilda fair,
 And fitting guard, should home repair;
 At nightfall Wilfrid should attend,
 With a strong band, his sister-friend,
 To bear with her from Rokeby's bowers
 To Barnard Castle's lofty towers,
 Secret and safe the banded chests,
 In which the wealth of Mortham rests.
 This hasty purpose fixed, they part,
 Each with a grieved and anxious heart.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

THE sultry summer day is done,
The western hills have hid the sun,
But mountain peak and village spire
Retain reflection of his fire.
Old Barnard's towers are purple still,
To those that gaze from Toller-hill;
Distant and high, the tower of Bowes
Like steel upon the anvil glows;
And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
Rich with the spoils of parting day,
In crimson and in gold arrayed,
Streaks yet a while the closing shade,
Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
The tints which brighter hours had given.
Thus aged men, full loth and slow,
The vanities of life forego,
And count their youthful follies o'er,
Till Memory lends her light no more.

II.

The eve, that slow on upland fades,
Has darker closed on Rokeby's glades,
Where sunk within their banks profound,
Her guardian streams to meeting wound.
The stately oaks, whose sombre frown
Of noontide made a twilight brown,
Impervious now to fainter light,
Of twilight make an early night.
Hoarse into middle air arose
The vespers of the roosting crows,
And with congenial murmurs seem
To wake the Genii of the stream;
Far louder clamored Greta's tide,
And Tees in deeper voice replied,
And fitful waked the evening wind,

Fitful in sighs its breath resigned.
 Wilfrid, whose fancy-nurtured soul
 Felt in the scene a soft control,
 With lighter footstep pressed the ground
 And often paused to look around ;
 And though his path was to his love,
 Could not but linger in the grove,
 To drink the thrilling interest dear,
 Of awful pleasure checked by fear.
 Such inconsistent moods have we,
 E'en when our passions strike the key.

III.

Now, through the wood's dark mazes past,
 The opening lawn he reached at last,
 Where, silvered by the moonlight ray,
 The ancient Hall before him lay.
 Those martial terrors long were fled,
 That frowned of old around its head :
 The battlements, the turrets gray,
 Seemed half abandoned to decay ;
 On barbican and keep of stone
 Stern Time the foeman's work had done.
 Where banners the invader braved,
 The harebell now and wall-flower waved :
 In the rude guard-room, where of yore
 Their weary hours the warders wore,
 Now, while the cheerful fagots blaze,
 On the paved floor the spindle plays ;
 The flanking guns dismantled lie,
 The moat is ruinous and dry,
 The grim portcullis gone—and all
 The fortress turned to peaceful Hall.

IV.

But yet precautions, lately ta'en,
 Showed danger's day revived again ;
 The court-yard wall showed marks of care,
 The fallen defences to repair,
 Lending such strength as might withstand
 The insult of marauding band.
 The beams once more were taught to bear

The trembling drawbridge into air,
And not, till questioned o'er and o'er,
For Wilfrid oped the jealous door;
And when he entered, bolt and bar
Resumed their place with sullen jar;
Then, as he crossed the vaulted porch,
The old gray porter raised his torch,
And viewed him o'er, from foot to head,
Ere to the hall his steps he led.
That huge old hall, of knightly state,
Dismantled seemed and desolate.
The moon through transom-shafts of stone,
Which crossed the latticed oriels, shone,
And by the mournful light she gave,
The Gothic vault seemed funeral cave.
Pennon and banner waved no more
O'er beams of stag and tusks of boar,
Nor glimmering arms were marshalled seen,
To glance those silvan spoils between.
Those arms, those ensigns, borne away,
Accomplished Rokeby's brave array,
But all were lost on Marston's day!
Yet here and there the moonbeams fall
Where armor yet adorns the wall,
Cumbrous of size, uncouth to sight,
And useless in the modern fight!
Like veteran relic of the wars,
Known only by neglected scars.

V.

Matilda soon to greet him came,
And bade them light the evening flame;
Said, all for parting was prepared,
And tarried but for Wilfrid's guard.
But then, reluctant to unfold
His father's avarice of gold,
He hinted, that lest jealous eye
Should on their precious burden pry,
He judged it best the castle gate
To enter when the night wore late;
And therefore he had left command
With those he trusted of his band,
That they should be at Rokeby met,

What time the midnight-watch was set,
Now Redmond came, whose anxious care
Till then was busied to prepare
All needful, meetly to arrange
The mansion for its mournful change.
With Wilfrid's care and kindness pleased,
His cold unready hand he seized,
And pressed it, till his kindly strain
The gentle youth returned again.
Seemed as between them this was said,
"A while let jealousy be dead ;
And let our contest be, whose care
Shall best assist this helpless fair."

VI.

There was no speech the truce to bind,
It was a compact of the mind.
A generous thought, at once impressed
On either rival's generous breast.
Matilda well the secret took,
From sudden change of mien and look ;
And—for not small had been her fear
Of jealous ire and danger near—
Felt, even in her dejected state,
A joy beyond the reach of fate.
They closed beside the chimney's blaze,
And talked, and hoped for happier days,
And lent their spirits' rising glow
A while to gild impending woe ;
High privilege of youthful time,
Worth all the pleasures of our prime !
The bickering fagot sparkled bright,
And gave the scene of love to sight,
Bade Wilfrid's cheek more lively glow,
Played on Matilda's neck of snow,
Her nut-brown curls and forehead high,
And laughed in Redmond's azure eye.
Two lovers by the maiden sate,
Without a glance of jealous hate ;
The maid her lovers sat between,
With open brow and equal mien ;—
It is a sight but rarely spied,
Thanks to man's wrath and woman's pride.

VII.

While thus in peaceful guise they sate,
 A knock alarmed the outer gate,
 And ere the tardy porter stirred,
 The tinkling of a harp was heard.
 A manly voice of mellow swell,
 Bore burden to the music well.

SONG.

“Summer ever is gone and past,
 Summer dew is falling fast;
 I have wandered all the day,
 Do not bid me farther stray!
 Gentle hearts, of gentle kin,
 Take the wandering harper in!”

But the stern porter answer gave,
 With “Get thee hence, thou strolling knave!
 The king wants soldiers; war, I trow,
 Were meeter trade for such as thou.”
 At this unkind reproof, again
 Answered the ready Minstrel’s strain.

SONG—*resumed.*

“Bid not me, in battle-field,
 Buckler lift, or broadsword wield!
 All my strength, and all my art,
 Is to touch the gentle heart,
 With the wizard notes that ring
 From the peaceful minstrel-string.”—

The porter, all unmoved, replied,—
 “Depart in peace, with Heaven to guide,
 If longer by the gate thou dwell,
 Trust me, thou shalt not part so well.”

VIII.

With somewhat of appealing look,
 The harper’s part young Wilfrid took:
 “These notes so wild and ready thrill,
 They show no vulgar minstrel’s skill;
 Hard were his task to seek a home
 More distant, since the night is come;

And for his faith I dare engage—
 Your Harpool's blood is soured by age;
 His gate, once readily displayed
 To greet the friend, the poor to aid,
 Now e'en to me, though known of old,
 Did but reluctantly unfold."—
 "O blame not, as poor Harpool's crime,
 An evil of this evil time.
 He deems dependent on his care,
 The safety of his patron's heir,
 Nor judges meet to ope the tower
 To guest unknown at parting hour,
 Urging his duty to excess
 Of rough and stubborn faithfulness.
 For this poor harper, I would fain
 He may relax:—Hark to his strain!"—

IX.

SONG—*resumed.*

"I have song of war for knight,
 Lay of love for lady bright,
 Fairy tale to lull the heir,
 Goblin grim the maids to scare.
 Dark the night, and long till day,
 Do not bid me farther stray!

"Rokeby's lords of martial fame,
 I can count them name by name;
 Legends of their line there be,
 Known to few, but known to me;
 If you honor Rokeby's kin,
 Take the wandering harper in!

"Rokeby's lords had fair regard
 For the harp, and for the bard;
 Baron's race throve never well,
 Where the curse of minstrel fell.
 If you love that noble kin,
 Take the weary harper in!"

"Hark! Harpool parleys—there is hope,"
 Said Redmond, "that the gate will ope."—
 —"For all thy brag and boast, I trow,
 Naught know'st thou of the Felon Sow,"

Quoth Harpool, "nor how Greta-side
 She roamed, and Rokeby forest wide;
 Nor how Ralph Rokeby gave the beast
 To Richmond's friars to make a feast.
 Of Gilbert Griffinson the tale
 Goes, and of gallant Peter Dale,
 That well could strike with sword amain,
 And of the valiant son of Spain,
 Friar Middleton, and blithe Sir Ralph;
 There were a jest to make us laugh!
 If thou canst tell it in yon shed,
 Thou'st won thy supper and thy bed."

x.

Matilda smiled; "Cold hope," said she,
 "From Harpool's love of minstrelsy!
 But, for this harper, may we dare,
 Redmond, to mend his couch and fare?"—
 —"O, ask me not!—At minstrel-string
 My heart from infancy would spring;
 Nor can I hear its simplest strain,
 But it brings Erin's dream again,
 When placed by Owen Lysagh's knee,
 (The Filea of O'Neale was he,*
 A blind and bearded man, whose eld
 Was sacred as a prophet's held,)
 I've seen a ring of rugged kerne,
 With aspect shaggy, wild, and stern,
 Enchanted by the master's lay,
 Linger around the livelong day,
 Shift from wild rage to wilder glee,
 To love, to grief, to ecstasy,
 And feel each varied change of soul
 Obedient to the bard's control.—
 Ah, Clandeboy! thy friendly floor
 Slieve-Donard's oak shall light no more;†

* The Filea, or Ollamh Re Dan, was the proper bard, or, as the name literally implies, poet. Each chieftain of distinction had one or more in his service, whose office was usually hereditary.

† Clandeboy is a district of Ulster, formerly possessed by the sept of the O'Neales, and Slieve-Donard, a romantic mountain in the same province. The clan was ruined after Tyrone's great rebellion, and their places of abode laid desolate.

Nor Owen's harp beside the blaze,
 Tell maiden's love, or hero's praise!
 The mantling brambles hide thy hearth,
 Centre of hospitable mirth;
 All undistinguished in the glade,
 My sires' glad home is prostrate laid,
 Their vassals wander wide and far,
 Serve foreign lords in distant war,
 And now the stranger's sons enjoy
 The lovely woods of Clandeboy!"
 He spoke, and proudly turned aside,
 The starting tear to dry and hide.

XI.

Matilda's dark and softened eye
 Was glistening ere O'Neale's was dry.
 Her hand upon his arm she laid,—
 "It is the will of Heaven," she said.
 "And think'st thou, Redmond, I can part
 From this loved home with lightsome heart,
 Leaving to wild neglect whate'er
 Even from my infancy was dear?
 For in this calm domestic bound
 Were all Matilda's pleasures found.
 That hearth my sire was wont to grace,
 Full soon may be a stranger's place;
 This hall, in which a child I played,
 Like thine, dear Redmond, lowly laid,
 The bramble and the thorn may braid;
 Or, passed for aye from me and mine,
 It ne'er may shelter Rokeby's line.
 Yet is this consolation given,
 My Redmond,—'tis the will of Heaven."
 Her word, her action, and her phrase
 Were kindly as in early days;
 For cold reserve had lost its power,
 In sorrow's sympathetic hour.
 Young Redmond dared not trust his voice,
 But rather had it been his choice
 To share that melancholy hour,
 Than, armed with all a chieftain's power,
 In full possession to enjoy
 Slieve-Donard wide, and Clandeboy.

XII.

The blood left Wilfrid's ashen cheek ;
 Matilda sees, and hastes to speak,—
 “ Happy in friendship's ready aid,
 Let all my murmurs here be staid !
 And Rokeby's Maiden will not part
 From Rokeby's hall with moody heart.
 This night at least, for Rokeby's fame,
 The hospitable hearth shall flame,
 And, ere its native heir retire,
 Find for the wanderer rest and fire,
 While this poor harper, by the blaze,
 Recounts the tale of other days.
 Bid Harpool ope the door with speed,
 Admit him, and relieve each need.—
 Meantime, kind Wycliffe, wilt thou try
 Thy minstrel skill ?—Nay, no reply—
 And look not sad !—I guess thy thought,
 Thy verse with laurels would be bought ;
 And poor Matilda, landless now,
 Has not a garland for thy brow.
 True, I must leave sweet Rokeby's glades,
 Nor wander more in Greta shades ;
 But sure, no rigid jailer, thou
 Wilt a short prison-walk allow,
 Where summer flowers grow wild at will,
 On Marwood-chase and Toller Hill ;
 Then holly green and lily gay
 Shall twine in guerdon of thy lay.”
 The mournful youth, a space aside,
 To tune Matilda's harp applied ;
 And then a low sad descant rung,
 As prelude to the lay he sung.

XIII.

SONG.

THE CYPRESS WREATH.

O, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
 Or twine it of the cypress-tree !
 Too lively glow the lilies light,
 The varnished holly's all too bright,
 The May-flower and the eglantine

May shade a brow less sad than mine;
 But, Lady, weave no wreath for me,
 Or weave it of the cypress-tree!

Let dimpled Mirth his temples twine
 With tendrils of the laughing vine;
 The manly oak, the pensive yew,
 To patriot and to sage be due;
 The myrtle bough bids lovers live,
 But that Matilda will not give;
 Then, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
 Or twine it of the cypress-tree!

Let merry England proudly rear
 Her blended roses, bought so dear;
 Let Albin bind her bonnet blue
 With heath and harebell dipped in dew;
 On favored Erin's crest be seen
 The flower she loves of emerald green—
 But, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
 Or twine it of the cypress-tree.

Strike the wild harp, while maids prepare
 The ivy meet for minstrel's hair;
 And, while his crown of laurel-leaves
 With bloody hand the victor weaves,
 Let the loud trump his triumph tell;
 But when you hear the passing-bell,
 Then, Lady, twine a wreath for me,
 And twine it of the cypress-tree.

Yes! twine for me the cypress bough;
 But, O Matilda, twine not now!
 Stay till a few brief months are past,
 And I have looked and loved my last!
 When villagers my shroud bestrew
 With panzies, rosemary, and rue,—
 Then, Lady, weave a wreath for me,
 And weave it of the cypress-tree.

XIV.

O'Neale observed the starting tear,
 And spoke with kind and blithesome cheer:
 "No, noble Wilfrid! ere the day
 When mourns the land thy silent lay,

Shall many a wreath be freely wove
By hand of friendship and of love.
I would not wish that rigid Fate
Had doomed thee to a captive's state,
Whose hands are bound by honor's law,
Who wears a sword he must not draw;
But were it so, in minstrel pride
The land together would we ride,
On prancing steeds, like harpers old,
Bound for the halls of barons bold.
Each lover of the lyre we'd seek,
From Michael's Mount to Skiddaw's Peak,
Survey wild Albin's mountain strand,
And roam green Erin's lovely land,
While thou the gentler souls should move,
With lay of pity and of love,
And I, thy mate, in rougher strain,
Would sing of war and warriors slain.
Old England's bards were vanquished then,
And Scotland's vaunted Hawthornden,
And, silenced on Iernian shore,
M'Curtin's harp should charm no more!"*
In lively mood he spoke, to wile
From Wilfrid's woe-worn cheek a smile.

XV.

"But," said Matilda, "ere thy name,
Good Redmond, gain its destined fame,
Say, wilt thou kindly deign to call
Thy brother-minstrel to the hall?
Bid all the household, too, attend,
Each in his rank a humble friend;
I know their faithful hearts will grieve,
When their poor Mistress takes her leave;
So let the horn and beaker flow
To mitigate their parting woe."
The harper came;—in youth's first prime
Himself; in mode of olden time
His garb was fashioned, to express
The ancient English minstrel's dress,

* MacCurtin, hereditary Ollamh of North Munster, and Filea to Donough Earl of Thomond and President of Munster.

A seemly gown of Kendal green,
 With gorget closed of silver sheen ;
 His harp in silken scarf was slung,
 And by his side an anlace hung.
 It seemed some masker's quaint array,
 For revel or for holiday.

XVI.

He made obeisance with a free
 Yet studied air of courtesy.
 Each look and accent, framed to please,
 Seemed to affect a playful ease ;
 His face was of that doubtful kind,
 That wins the eye, but not the mind ;
 Yet harsh it seemed to deem amiss
 Of brow so young and smooth as this.
 His was the subtle look and sly,
 That, spying all, seems naught to spy ;
 Round all the group his glances stole,
 Unmarked themselves, to mark the whole,
 Yet sunk beneath Matilda's look,
 Nor could the eye of Redmond brook.
 To the suspicious, or the old,
 Subtle and dangerous and bold
 Had seemed this self-invited guest ;
 But young our lovers,—and the rest,
 Wrapt in their sorrow and their fear
 At parting of their Mistress dear,
 Tear-blinded to the Castle-hall,
 Came as to bear her funeral pall.

XVII.

All that expression base was gone,
 When waked the guest his minstrel tone ;
 It fled at inspiration's call,
 As erst the demon fled from Saul.
 More noble glance he cast around,
 More free-drawn breath inspired the sound,
 His pulse beat bolder and more high,
 In all the pride of minstrelsy !
 Alas ! too soon that pride was o'er,
 Sunk with the lay that bade it soar !
 His soul resumed, with habit's chain.

Its vices wild and follies vain,
 And gave the talent, with him born,
 To be a common curse and scorn.
 Such was the youth whom Rokeby's Maid,
 With condescending kindness, prayed
 Here to renew the strain she loved,
 At distance heard and well approved.

XVIII.

SONG

THE HARP.

I was a wild and wayward boy,
 My childhood scorned each childish toy;
 Retired from all, reserved and coy,
 To musing prone,
 I wooed my solitary joy,
 My harp alone.

My youth, with bold Ambition's mood,
 Despised the humble stream and wood,
 Where my poor father's cottage stood,
 To fame unknown;—
 What should my soaring views make good?
 My harp alone!

Love came with all his frantic fire,
 And wild romance of vain desire;
 The baron's daughter heard my lyre,
 And praised the tone;—
 What could presumptuous hope inspire?
 My harp alone!

At manhood's touch the bubble burst,
 And manhood's pride the vision curst,
 And all that had my folly nursed
 Love's sway to own;
 Yet spared the spell that lulled me first,
 My harp alone!

Woe came with war, and want with woe;
 And it was mine to undergo
 Each outrage of the rebel foe;—
 Can aught atone
 My fields laid waste, my cot laid low?
 My harp alone!

Ambition's dream I've seen depart,
 Have rued of penury the smart,
 Have felt of love the venom'd dart,
 When hope was flown;
 Yet rests one solace to my heart,—
 My harp alone!

Then over mountain, moor, and hill,
 My faithful harp, I'll bear thee still,
 And when this life of want and ill
 Is well-nigh gone,
 Thy strings mine elegy shall thrill,
 My harp alone!

XIX.

“A pleasing lay!” Matilda said;
 But Harpool shook his old gray head,
 And took his baton and his torch,
 To seek his guard-room in the porch.
 Edmund observed—with sudden change,
 Among the strings his fingers range,
 Until they waked a bolder glee
 Of military melody;
 Then paused amid the martial sound,
 And looked with well-feigned fear around;
 “None to this noble house belong,”
 He said, “that would a Minstrel wrong,
 Whose fate has been, through good and ill,
 To love his Royal Master still;
 And, with your honored leave, would fain
 Rejoice you with a loyal strain.”
 Then, as assured by sign and look,
 The warlike tone again he took;
 And Harpool stopped, and turned to hear
 A ditty of the Cavalier.

XX.

SONG.

THE CAVALIER.

While the dawn on the mountain was misty and gray,
 My true love has mounted his steed and away,
 Over hill, over valley, o'er dale, and o'er down;
 Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the
 Crown!

He has doffed the silk doublet the breastplate to bear,
 He has placed the steel cap o'er his long flowing hair,
 From his belt to his stirrup his broadsword hangs
 down,—

Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the
 Crown!

For the rights of fair England that broadsword he
 draws,

Her King is his leader, her Church is his cause;
 His watchword is honor, his pay is renown,—
 God strike with the Gallant that strikes for the Crown.

They may boast of their Fairfax, their Waller, and all
 The round-headed rebels of Westminster Hall;
 But tell these bold traitors of London's proud town,
 That the spears of the North have encircled the Crown

There's Derby and Cavendish, dread of their foes,
 There's Erin's high Ormond, and Scotland's Montrose!
 Would you match the base Skippon, and Massey, and
 Brown,

With the Barons of England, that fight for the Crown?

Now joy to the crest of the brave Cavalier!
 Be his banner unconquered, resistless his spear,
 Till in peace and in triumph his toils he may drown,
 In a pledge to fair England, her Church, and her Crown.

XXI.

“Alas!” Matilda said, “that strain,
 Good harper, now is heard in vain!
 The time has been, at such a sound,
 When Rokeby's vassals gathered round,
 A hundred manly hearts would bound;
 But now, the stirring verse we hear,
 Like trump in dying soldier's ear!
 Listless and sad the notes we own,
 The power to answer them is flown.
 Yet not without his meet applause
 Be he that sings the rightful cause,
 Even when the crisis of its fate
 To human eye seems desperate.
 While Rokeby's Heir such power retains,

Let this slight guerdon pay thy pains:—
 And, lend thy harp; I fain would try,
 If ray poor skill can aught supply,
 Ere yet I leave my fathers' hall,
 To mourn the cause in which we fall."

XXII.

The harper, with a downcast look,
 And trembling hand, her bounty took.—
 As yet, the conscious pride of art
 Had steeled him in his treacherous part;
 A powerful spring, of force unguessed,
 That hath each gentler mood suppressed,
 And reigned in many a human breast;
 From his that plans the red campaign,
 To his that wastes the woodland reign.
 The failing wing, the bloodshot eye,
 The sportsman marks with apathy,—
 Each feeling of his victim's ill
 Drowned in his own successful skill.
 The vet'ran, too, who now no more
 Aspires to heed the battle's roar,
 Loves still the triumph of his art,
 And traces on the pencilled chart
 Some stern invader's destined way,
 Through blood and ruin to his prey;
 Patriots to death, and towns to flame,
 He dooms, to raise another's name,
 And shares the guilt, though not the fame.
 What pays him for his span of time
 Spent in premeditated crime?
 What against pity arms his heart?—
 It is the conscious pride of art.

XXIII.

But principles in Edmund's mind
 Were baseless, vague, and undefined.
 His soul, like bark with rudder lost,
 On Passion's changeful tide was tost;
 Nor Vice nor Virtue had the power
 Beyond the impression of the hour;
 And, oh! when Passion rules, how rare
 The hours that fall to Virtue's share!

Yet now she roused her—for the pride,
That lack of sterner guilt supplied,
Could scarce support him when arose
The lay that mourned Matilda's woes.

SONG.

THE FAREWELL.

The sound of Rokeby's woods I hear,
They mingle with the song:
Dark Greta's voice is in mine ear,
I must not hear them long.
From every loved and native haunt
The native Heir must stray,
And, like a ghost whom sunbeams daunt,
Must part before the day.

Soon from the halls my fathers reared,
Their scutcheons may descend:
A line so long beloved and feared
May soon obscurely end.
No longer here Matilda's tone
Shall bid these echoes swell;
Yet shall they hear her proudly own
The cause in which we fell.

The Lady paused, and then again
Resumed the lay in loftier strain.

XXIV.

Let our halls and towers decay,
Be our name and line forgot,
Lands and manors pass away,—
We but share our Monarch's lot.
If no more our annals show
Battles won and banners taken,
Still in death, defeat, and woe,
Ours be loyalty unshaken!

Constant still in danger's hour,
Princes owned our fathers' aid;
Lands and honors, wealth and power,
Well their loyalty repaid.
Perish wealth, and power, and pride!

Mortal boons by mortals given •
 But let Constancy abide,—
 Constancy's the gift of Heaven.

XXV.

While thus Matilda's lay was heard,
 A thousand thoughts in Edmund stirred.
 In peasant life he might have known
 As fair a face, as sweet a tone;
 But village notes could ne'er supply
 That rich and varied melody;
 And ne'er in cottage-maid was seen
 The easy dignity of mien,
 Claiming respect, yet waiving state,
 That marks the daughters of the great.
 Yet not, perchance, had these alone
 His scheme of purposed guilt o'erthrown.
 But while her energy of mind
 Superior rose to griefs combined,—
 Lending its kindling to her eye,
 Giving her form new majesty,—
 To Edmund's thought Matilda seemed
 The very object he had dreamed;
 When, long ere guilt his soul had known,
 In Winston bowers he mused alone,
 Taxing his fancy to combine
 The face, the air, the voice divine,
 Of princess fair, by cruel fate
 Reft of her honors, power, and state,
 Till to her rightful realm restored
 By destined hero's conquering sword.

XXVI.

“Such was my vision!” Edmund thought;
 “And have I, then, the ruin wrought
 Of such a maid, that fancy ne'er
 In fairest vision formed her peer?
 Was it my hand that could uncloze
 The postern to her ruthless foes?
 Foes, lost to honor, law, and faith,
 Their kindest mercy sudden death!
 Have I done this? I! who have swore,
 That if the globe such angel bore,

I would have traced its circle broad,
 To kiss the ground on which she trode!—
 And now—O! would that earth would rive,
 And close upon me while alive!—
 Is there no hope? Is all then lost?—
 Bertram's already on his post!
 Even now, beside the Hall's arched door,
 I saw his shadow cross the floor!
 He was to wait my signal strain—
 A little respite thus we gain:
 By what I heard the menials say,
 Young Wycliffe's troop are on their way—
 Alarm precipitates the crime!
 My harp must wear away the time."—
 And then, in accents faint and low,
 He faltered forth a tale of woe.

XXVII.

BALLAD.

"And whither would you lead me, then?"
 Quoth the Friar of orders gray;
 And the Ruffians twain replied again,
 "By a dying woman to pray."—

"I see," he said, "a lovely sight,
 A sight bodes little harm,
 A lady as a lily bright,
 With an infant on her arm."—

"Then do thine office, Friar gray,
 And see thou shrive her free!
 Else shall the sprite, that parts to-night,
 Fling all its guilt on thee.

"Let mass be said, and trentals read,
 When thou'rt to convent gone,
 And bid the bell of St. Benedict
 Toll out its deepest tone."

The shrift is done, the Friar is gone,
 Blindfolded as he came—
 Next morning, all in Littlecot Hall
 Were weeping for their dame.

Wild Darrell is an altered man,
 The village crones can tell;
 He looks pale as clay, and strives to pray,
 If he hears the convent bell.

If prince or peer cross Darrell's way,
 He'll beard him in his pride—
 If he meet a Friar of orders gray,
 He droops and turns aside.

XXVIII.

“Harper! methinks thy magic lays,”
 Matilda said, “can goblins raise!
 Well-nigh my fancy can discern,
 Near the dark porch, a visage stern;
 Even now, in yonder shadowy nook,
 I see it!—Redmond, Wilfrid, look!—
 A human form distinct and clear—
 God, for thy mercy!—It draws near!”
 She saw too true. Stride after stride,
 The centre of that chamber wide
 Fierce Bertram gained; then made a stand,
 And, proudly waving with his hand,
 Thundered—“Be still, upon your lives!—
 He bleeds who speaks, he dies who strives.”
 Behind their chief, the robber crew
 Forth from the darkened portal drew,
 In silence—save that echo dread
 Returned their heavy measured tread.
 The lamp's uncertain lustre gave
 Their arms to gleam, their plumes to wave;
 File after file in order pass,
 Like forms on Banquo's mystic glass.
 Then, halting at their leader's sign,
 At once they formed and curved their line,
 Hemming within its crescent drear
 Their victims, like a herd of deer.
 Another sign, and to the aim
 Levelled at once their muskets came,
 As waiting but their chieftain's word,
 To make their fatal volley heard.

XXIX.

Back in a heap the menials drew ;
 Yet, even in mortal terror, true,
 Their pale and startled group oppose
 Between Matilda and the foes.
 "O, haste thee, Wilfrid!" Redmond cried ;
 "Undo that wicket by thy side!
 Bear hence Matilda—gain the wood—
 The pass may be a while made good—
 Thy band, ere this, must sure be nigh—
 O speak not—dally not—but fly!"
 While yet the crowd their motions hide,
 Through the low wicket door they glide.
 Through vaulted passages they wind,
 In Gothic intricacy twined ;
 Wilfrid half led, and half he bore,
 Matilda to the postern-door,
 And safe beneath the forest tree,
 The Lady stands at liberty.
 The moonbeams, the fresh gale's caress,
 Renewed suspended consciousness ;—
 "Where's Redmond?" eagerly she cries :
 "Thou answerest not—he dies! he dies!
 And thou hast left him, all bereft
 Of mortal aid—with murderers left!
 I know it well—he would not yield
 His sword to man—his doom is sealed!
 For my scorned life, which thou hast bought
 At price of his, I thank thee not."

XXX.

The unjust reproach, the angry look,
 The heart of Wilfrid could not brook.
 "Lady," he said, "my band so near,
 In safety thou mayst rest thee here.
 For Redmond's death thou shalt not mourn,
 If mine can buy his safe return."
 He turned away—his heart throbb'd high,
 The tear was bursting from his eye ;
 The sense of her injustice pressed
 Upon the Maid's distracted breast,—
 "Stay, Wilfrid, stay! all aid is vain!"

He heard, but turned him not again ;
 He reaches now the postern-door—
 Now enters—and is seen no more.

XXXI.

With all the agony that e'er
 Was gendered 'twixt suspense and fear,
 She watched the line of windows tall,
 Whose Gothic lattice lights the Hall,
 Distinguished by the paly red
 The lamps in dim reflection shed,
 While all beside in wan moonlight
 Each grated casement glimmered white.
 No sight of harm, no sound of ill,
 It is a deep and midnight still.
 Who looked upon the scene, had guessed
 All in the Castle were at rest :
 When sudden on the windows shone
 A lightning flash, just seen and gone !
 A shot is heard—Again the flame
 Flashed thick and fast—a volley came ;
 Then echoed wildly, from within,
 Of shout and scream the mingled din,
 And weapon-clash and maddening cry,
 Of those who kill, and those who die !—
 As filled the Hall with sulphurous smoke,
 More red, more dark, the death-flash broke ;
 And forms were on the lattice cast,
 That struck or struggled, as they passed.

XXXII.

What sounds upon the midnight wind
 Approach so rapidly behind ?
 It is, it is the tramp of steeds !
 Matilda hears the sound, she speeds,
 Seizes upon the leader's rein—
 " O, haste to aid, ere aid be vain !
 Fly to the postern—gain the Hall !"
 From saddle spring the troopers all ;
 Their gallant steeds, at liberty,
 Run wild along the moonlight lea.
 But, ere they burst upon the scene,
 Full stubborn had the conflict been.

When Bertram marked Matilda's flight,
It gave the signal for the fight;
And Rokeby's veterans, seamed with scars
Of Scotland's and of Erin's wars,
Their momentary panic o'er,
Stood to the arms which then they bore,
(For they were weaponed, and prepared
Their Mistress on her way to guard.)
Then cheered them to the fight O'Neale,
Then pealed the shot, and clashed the steel;
The war-smoke soon with sable breath
Darkened the scene of blood and death,
While on the few defenders close
The Bandits, with redoubled blows,
And twice driven back, yet fierce and fell,
Renew the charge with frantic yell.

XXXIII.

Wilfrid has fallen—but o'er him stood
Young Redmond, soiled with smoke and blood,
Cheering his mates with heart and hand
Still to make good their desperate stand.
“Up, comrades, up! In Rokeby halls
Ne'er be it said our courage falls.
What! faint ye for their savage cry,
Or do the smoke-wreaths daunt your eye?
These rafters have returned a shout
As loud at Rokeby's wassail rout,
As thick a smoke these hearths have given
At Hallow-tide or Christmas-even.*
Stand to it yet! renew the fight,
For Rokeby's and Matilda's right!
These slaves! they dare not, hand to hand,
Bide buffet from a true man's brand.”
Impetuous, active, fierce, and young,
Upon the advancing foes he sprung.
Woe to the wretch at whom is bent
His brandished falchion's sheer descent!
Backward they scattered as he came,
Like wolves before the levin flame,

* Such an exhortation was, in similar circumstances, actually given to his followers, by a Welsh chieftain.

When 'mid their howling conclave driven,
 Hath glanced the thunderbolt of heaven.*
 Bertram rushed on—but Harpool clasped
 His knees, although in death he gasped,
 His falling corpse before him flung,
 And round the trammelled ruffian clung.
 Just then, the soldiers filled the dome,
 And, shouting, charged the felons home
 So fiercely, that, in panic dread,
 They broke, they yielded, fell, or fled.
 Bertram's stern voice they heed no more,
 Though heard above the battle's roar;
 While, trampling down the dying man,
 He strove, with volley'd threat and ban,
 In scorn of odds, in fate's despite,
 To rally up the desperate fight.

XXXIV.

Soon, murkier clouds the Hall enfold
 Than e'er from battle-thunders rolled!
 So dense, the combatants scarce know
 To aim or to avoid the blow.
 Smothering and blindfold grows the fight—
 But soon shall dawn a dismal light!
 'Mid cries and clashing arms there came
 The hollow sound of rushing flame;
 New horrors on the tumult dire
 Arise—the Castle is on fire!
 Doubtful, if chance had cast the brand,
 Or frantic Bertram's desperate hand.
 Matilda saw—for frequent broke
 From the dim casements gusts of smoke.
 Yon tower, which late so clear defined
 On the fair hemisphere reclined,
 That, pencilled on its azure pure,
 The eye could count each embrasure,
 Now, swathed within the sweeping cloud,
 Seems giant spectre in his shroud;
 Till, from each loop-hole flashing light,
 A spout of fire shines ruddy bright,
 And, gathering to united glare,
 Streams high into the midnight air;
 A dismal beacon far and wide.

That wakened Greta's slumoeing side.
Soon all beneath, through gallery long
And pendant arch, the fire flashed strong,
Snatching whatever could maintain,
Raise, or extend, its furious reign;
Startling, with closer cause of dread,
The females who the conflict fled,
And now rushed forth upon the plain,
Filling the air with clamors vain.

XXXV.

But ceased not yet, the Hall within,
The shriek, the shout, the carnage-din,
Till bursting lattices give proof
The flames have caught the raftered roof.
What! wait they till its beams amain
Crash on the slayers and the slain?
The alarm is caught—the drawbridge falls,
The warriors hurry from the walls,
But, by the conflagration's light,
Upon the lawn renew the fight.
Each straggling felon down was hewed,
Not one could gain the sheltering wood;
But forth the affrighted harper sprung,
And to Matilda's robe he clung.
Her shriek, entreaty, and command,
Stopped the pursuer's lifted hand.
Denzil and he alive were ta'en;
The rest, save Bertram, all are slain.

XXXVI.

And where is Bertram?—Soaring high,
The general flame ascends the sky;
In gathered group the soldiers gaze
Upon the broad and roaring blaze,
When, like infernal demon, sent
Red from his penal element,
To plague and to pollute the air,—
His face all gore, on fire his hair,
Forth from the central mass of smoke
The giant form of Bertram broke!
His brandished sword on high he rears,
Then plunged among opposing spears;

Round his left arm his mantle trussed,
 Received and foiled three lances' thrust.
 Nor these his headlong course withstood,
 Like reeds he snapped the tough ash-wood.
 In vain his foes around him clung ;
 With matchless force aside he flung
 Their boldest,—as the bull, at bay,
 Tosses the ban-dog from his way,
 Through forty foes his path he made,
 And safely gained the forest glade.

XXXVII.

Scarce was this final conflict o'er,
 When from the postern Redmond bore
 Wilfrid, who, as of life bereft,
 Had in the fatal Hall been left,
 Deserted there by all his train ;
 But Redmond saw, and turned again.—
 Beneath an oak he laid him down,
 That in the blaze gleamed ruddy brown,
 And then his mantle's clasp undid ;
 Matilda held his drooping head,
 Till, given to breathe the freer air,
 Returning life repaid their care.
 He gazed on them with heavy sigh,—
 "I could have wished even thus to die!"
 No more he said—for now with speed
 Each trooper had regained his steed ;
 The ready palfrey stood arrayed,
 For Redmond and for Rokeby's Maid ;
 Two Wilfrid on his horse sustain,
 One leads his charger by the rein.
 But oft Matilda looked behind,
 As up the Vale of Tees they wind,
 Where far the mansion of her sires
 Beaconed the dale with midnight fires.
 In gloomy arch above them spread,
 The clouded heaven lowered bloody red :
 Beneath, in sombre light, the flood
 Appeared to roll in waves of blood.
 Then, one by one, was heard to fall
 The tower, the donjon-keep, the hall.
 Each rushing down with thunder sound,

A space the conflagration drowned ;
Till, gathering strength, again it rose,
Announced its triumph in its close,
Shook wide its light the landscape o'er,
Then sunk—and Rokeby was no more!

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

THE summer sun, whose early power
Was wont to gild Matilda's bower,
And rouse her with his matin ray
Her duteous orisons to pay,—
That morning sun has three times seen
The flowers unfold on Rokeby green,
But sees no more the slumbers fly
From fair Matilda's hazel eye ;
That morning sun has three times broke
On Rokeby's glades of elm and oak,
But, rising from their silvan screen,
Marks no gray turrets glance between.
A shapeless mass lie keep and tower,
That, hissing to the morning shower,
Can but with smouldering vapor pay
The early smile of summer day.
The peasant, to his labor bound,
Pauses to view the blackened mound,
Striving, amid the ruined space,
Each well-remembered spot to trace.
That length of frail and fire-scorched wall
Once screened the hospitable hall ;
When yonder broken arch was whole,
'Twas there was dealt the weekly dole ;
And where yon tottering columns nod,
The chapel sent the hymn to God.—
So flits the world's uncertain span!
Nor zeal for God, nor love for man,
Gives mortal monuments a date
Beyond the power of Time and Fate.

The towers must share the builder's doom;
 Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb:
 But better boon benignant Heaven
 To Faith and Charity has given,
 And bids the Christian hope sublime
 Transcend the bounds of Fate and Time.

II.

Now the third night of summer came,
 Since that which witnessed Rokeby's flame.
 On Brignall cliffs and Scargill brake
 The owl's homilies awake,
 The bittern screamed from rush and flag,
 The raven slumbered on his crag,
 Forth from his den the otter drew,—
 Grayling and trout their tyrant knew,
 As between reed and sedge he peers,
 With fierce round snout and sharpened ears,
 Or, prowling by the moonbeam cool,
 Watches the stream or swims the pool;—
 Perched on his wonted eyrie high,
 Sleep seals the tercelet's wearied eye,
 That all the day had watched so well
 The cushat dart across the dell.
 In dubious beam reflected shone
 That lofty cliff of pale gray stone,
 Beside whose base the secret cave
 To rapine late a refuge gave.
 The crag's wild crest of copse and yew
 On Greta's breast dark shadows threw;
 Shadows that met or shunned the sight,
 With every change of fitful light;
 As hope and fear alternate chase
 Our course through life's uncertain race.

III.

Gliding by crag and copsewood green,
 A solitary form was seen
 To trace with stealthy pace the wold,
 Like fox that seeks the midnight fold,
 And pauses oft, and cowers dismayed
 At every breath that stirs the shade.
 He passes now the ivy bush,—

The owl has seen him, and is hush ;
 He passes now the doddered oak,—
 He heard the startled raven croak ;
 Lower and lower he descends,
 Rustle the leaves, the brushwood bends ;
 The otter hears him tread the shore,
 And dives, and is beheld no more :
 And by the cliff of pale gray stone
 The midnight wanderer stands alone.
 Methinks, that by the moon we trace
 A well-remembered form and face !
 That stripling shape, that cheek so pale,
 Combine to tell a rueful tale,
 Of powers misused, of passion's force,
 Of guilt, of grief, and of remorse !
 'Tis Edmund's eye, at every sound
 That flings that guilty glance around ;
 'Tis Edmund's trembling haste divides
 The brushwood that the cavern hides ;
 And, when its narrow porch lies bare,
 'Tis Edmund's form that enters there.

IV.

His flint and steel have sparkled bright,
 A lamp hath lent the cavern light.
 Fearful and quick his eye surveys
 Each angle of the gloomy maze.
 Since last he left that stern abode,
 It seemed as none its floor had trode ;
 Untouched appeared the various spoil,
 The purchase of his comrades' toil ;
 Masks and disguises grimed with mud,
 Arms broken and defiled with blood,
 And all the nameless tools that aid
 Night-felons in their lawless trade,
 Upon the gloomy walls were hung,
 Or lay in nooks obscurely flung.
 Still on the sordid board appear
 The relics of the noontide cheer :
 Flagons and empty flasks were there,
 And bench o'erthrown, and shattered chair ;
 And all around the semblance showed,
 As when the final revel glowed,

When the red sun was setting fast,
 And parting pledge Guy Denzil past.
 "To Rokeby treasure-vaults!" they quaffed,
 And shouted loud and wildly laughed,
 Poured maddening from the rocky door,
 And parted—to return no more!
 They found in Rokeby vaults their doom,—
 A bloody death, a burning tomb!

V.

There his own peasant dress he spies,
 Doffed to assume that quaint disguise;
 And, shuddering, thought upon his glee,
 When pranked in garb of minstrelsy.
 "O, be the fatal art accurst,"
 He cried, "that moved my folly first;
 Till, bribed by bandits' base applause,
 I burst through God's and Nature's laws!
 Three summer days are scanty past
 Since I have trod this cavern last,
 A thoughtless wretch, and prompt to err—
 But, O, as yet no murderer!
 Even now I list my comrades' cheer,
 That general laugh is in mine ear,
 Which raised my pulse, and steeled my heart,
 As I rehearsed my treacherous part—
 And would that all since then could seem
 The phantom of a fever's dream!
 But fatal Memory notes too well
 The horrors of the dying yell,
 From my despairing mates that broke,
 When flashed the fire and rolled the smoke;
 When the avengers shouting came,
 And hemmed us 'twixt the sword and flame
 My frantic flight,—the lifted brand,—
 That angel's interposing hand!—
 If, for my life from slaughter freed,
 I yet could pay some grateful meed!
 Perchance this object of my quest
 May aid"—he turned, nor spoke the rest.

VI.

Due northward from the rugged hearth,
 With paces five he metes the earth,

Then toiled with mattock to explore
The entrails of the cavern floor,
Nor paused till, deep beneath the ground,
His search a small steel casket found.
Just as he stooped to loose its hasp,
His shoulder felt a giant grasp.
He started, and looked up aghast,
Then shrieked!—"Twas Bertram held him fast.
"Fear not!" he said; but who could hear
That deep stern voice, and cease to fear?
"Fear not!—By heaven, he shakes as much,
As partridge in the falcon's clutch:"—
He raised him, and unloosed his hold,
While from the opening casket rolled
A chain and reliquaire of gold.
Bertram beheld it with surprise,
Gazed on its fashion and device,
Then, cheering Edmund as he could,
Somewhat he smoothed his rugged mood:
For still the youth's half-lifted eye
Quivered with terror's agony,
And sidelong glanced, as to explore,
In meditated flight, the door.
"Sit," Bertram said, "from danger free:
Thou canst not, and thou shalt not, flee.
Chance brings me hither; hill and plain
I've sought for refuge-place in vain.
And tell me now, thou aguish boy,
What makest thou here? what means this toy?
Denzil and thou, I marked, were ta'en;
What lucky chance unbound your chain?
I deemed, long since on Baliol's tower,
Your heads were warped with sun and shower.
Tell me the whole—and, mark! naught e'er
Chafes me like falsehood, or like fear."
Gathering his courage to his aid,
But trembling still, the youth obeyed.

VII.

"Denzil and I two nights passed o'er
In fetters on the dungeon floor.
A guest the third sad morrow brought;
Our hold dark Oswald Wycliffe sought,

And eyed my comrade long askance,
 With fixed and penetrating glance,
 'Guy Denzil art thou called?'—'The same.'—
 'At Court who served wild Buckingham;
 Thence banished, won a keeper's place,
 So Villiers willed, in Marwood-chase;
 That lost—I need not tell thee why—
 Thou madest thy wit thy wants supply,
 Then fought for Rokeby:—Have I guessed
 My prisoner right?'—'At thy behest.'—
 He paused a while, and then went on
 With low and confidential tone;—
 Me, as I judge, not then he saw,
 Close nestled in my couch of straw.—
 'List to me, Guy. Thou knowest the great
 Have frequent need of what they hate;
 Hence, in their favor oft we see
 Unscrupled, useful men like thee.
 Were I disposed to bid thee live,
 What pledge of faith hast thou to give?'

VIII.

"The ready Fiend, who never yet
 Hath failed to sharpen Denzil's wit,
 Prompted his lie—'His only child
 Should rest his pledge.'—The Baron smiled,
 And turned to me—'Thou art his son?'
 I bowed—our fetters were undone,
 And we were led to hear apart
 A dreadful lesson of his art.
 Wilfrid, he said, his heir and son,
 Had fair Matilda's favor won;
 And long since had their union been,
 But for her father's bigot spleen,
 Whose brute and blindfold party rage
 Would, force per force, her hand engage
 To a base kern of Irish earth,
 Unknown his lineage and his birth,
 Save that a dying ruffian bore
 The infant brat to Rokeby door.
 Gentle restraint, he said, would lead
 Old Rokeby to enlarge his creed;
 But fair occasion he must find

For such restraint well meant and kind,
The Knight being rendered to his charge
But as a prisoner at large.

IX.

“He schooled us in a well-forged tale,
Of scheme the Castle walls to scale,
To which was leagued each Cavalier
That dwells upon the Tyne and Wear;
That Rokeby, his parole forgot,
Had dealt with us to aid the plot.
Such was the charge, which Denzil’s zeal
Of hate to Rokeby and O’Neale
Proffered, as witness, to make good,
Even though the forfeit were their blood.
I scrupled, until o’er and o’er
His prisoners’ safety Wycliffe swore;
And then—alas! what needs there more?
I knew I should not live to say
The proffer I refused that day;
Ashamed to live, yet loth to die,
I soiled me with their infamy!”—
“Poor youth,” said Bertram, “wavering still,
Unfit alike for good or ill!
But what fell next?”—“Soon as at large
Was scrolled and signed our fatal charge,
There never yet, on tragic stage,
Was seen so well a painted rage
As Oswald’s showed! With loud alarm
He called his garrison to arm;
From tower to tower, from post to post,
He hurried as if all were lost;
Consigned to dungeon and to chain
The good old Knight and all his train;
Warned each suspected Cavalier,
Within his limits, to appear
To-morrow, at the hour of noon,
In the high church of Egliston.”—

X.

“Of Egliston!—Even now I passed,
Said Bertram, “as the night closed fast;
Torches and cressets gleamed around,

I heard the saw and hammer sound,
 And I could mark they toiled to raise
 A scaffold, hung with sable baize,
 Which the grim headsman's scene displayed,
 Block, axe, and sawdust ready laid.
 Some evil deed will there be done,
 Unless Matilda wed his son ;—
 She loves him not—'tis shrewdly guessed
 That Redmond rules the damsel's breast.
 This is a turn of Oswald's skill ;
 But I may meet, and foil him still !—
 How camest thou to thy freedom ?"—“ There
 Lies mystery more dark and rare.
 In midst of Wycliffe's well-feigned rage,
 A scroll was offered by a page,
 Who told, a muffled horseman late
 Had left it at the Castle gate.
 He broke the seal—his cheek showed change,
 Sudden, portentous, wild, and strange ;
 The mimic passion of his eye
 Was turned to actual agony ;
 His hand like summer sapling shook,
 Terror and guilt were in his look.
 Denzil he judged, in time of need,
 Fit counsellor for evil deed ;
 And thus apart his counsel broke,
 While with a ghastly smile he spoke :—

XI.

“ ‘ As in the pageants of the stage,
 The dead awake in this wild age.
 Mortham—whom all men deemed decreed
 In his own deadly snare to bleed,
 Slain by a bravo, whom, o'er sea,
 He trained to aid in murdering me,—
 Mortham has 'scaped ! The coward shot
 The steed, but harmed the rider not.’ ”
 Here, with an execration fell,
 Bertram leaped up, and paced the cell :—
 “ Thine own gray head, or bosom dark,”
 He muttered, “ may be surer mark ! ”
 Then sat, and signed to Edmund, pale
 With terror, to resume his tale.

“Wycliffe went on :—‘Mark with what flights
Of wildered reverie he writes :—

THE LETTER.

“Ruler of Mortham’s destiny!
Though dead, thy victim lives to thee.
Once had he all that binds to life,
A lovely child, a lovelier wife;
Wealth, fame, and friendship, were his own—
Thou gavest the word, and they are flown.
Mark how he pays thee :—To thy hand
He yields his honors and his land,
One boon promised ;—Restore his child !
And, from his native land exiled,
Mortham no more returns to claim
His lands, his honors, or his name ;
Refuse him this, and from the slain
Thou shalt see Mortham rise again.’—

XII.

“This billet while the baron read,
His faltering accents showed his dread ;
He pressed his forehead with his palm,
Then took a scornful tone and calm ;
‘Wild as the winds, as billows wild !
What wot I of his spouse or child ?
Hither he brought a joyous dame,
Unknown her lineage or her name :
Her, in some frantic fit he slew ;
The nurse and child in fear withdrew.
Heaven be my witness ! wist I where
To find this youth, my kinsman’s heir,—
Unguerdoned, I would give with joy
The father’s arms to fold his boy,
And Mortham’s lands and towers resign
To the just heirs of Mortham’s line.’—
Thou know’st that scarcely e’en his fear
Suppresses Denzil’s cynic sneer ;—
‘Then happy is thy vassal’s part,’
He said, ‘to ease his patron’s heart !
In thine own jailer’s watchful care
Lies Mortham’s just and rightful heir ;
Thy generous wish is fully won,—
Redmond O’Neale is Mortham’s son.’—

XIII.

“Up starting with a frenzied look,
 His clenched hand the Baron shook :
 ‘Is Hell at work? or dost thou rave,
 Or darest thou palter with me, slave!
 Perchance thou wot’st not, Barnard’s towers
 Have racks, of strange and ghastly powers.’
 Denzil, who well his safety knew,
 Firmly rejoined, ‘I tell thee true.
 Thy racks could give thee but to know
 The proofs, which I, untortured show.
 It chanced upon a winter night,
 When early snow made Stanmore white,
 That very night, when first of all
 Redmond O’Neale saw Rokeby-hall,
 It was my goodly lot to gain
 A reliquary and a chain,
 Twisted and chased of massive gold.
 —Demand not how the prize I hold!
 It was not given, nor lent, nor sold.—
 Gilt tablets to the chain were hung,
 With letters in the Irish tongue.
 I hid my spoil, for there was need
 That I should leave the land with speed;
 Nor then I deemed it safe to bear
 On mine own person gems so rare.
 Small heed I of the tablets took,
 But since have spelled them by the book,
 When some sojourn in Erin’s land
 Of their wild speech had given command.
 But darkling was the sense; the phrase
 And language those of other days,
 Involved of purpose, as to foil
 An interloper’s prying toil.
 The words, but not the sense, I knew,
 Till fortune gave the guiding clew.

XIV.

“‘Three days since was that clue revealed
 In Thorsgill as I lay concealed,
 And heard at full when Rokeby’s Maid
 Her uncle’s history displayed;

And now I can interpret well
 Each syllable the tablets tell.
 Mark, then: Fair Edith was the joy
 Of old O'Neale of Clandeboy;
 But from her sire and country fled,
 In secret Mortham's lord to wed.
 O'Neale, his first resentment o'er,
 Dispatched his son to Greta's shore,
 Enjoining he should make him known
 (Until his farther will were shown)
 To Edith, but to her alone.
 What of their ill-starred meeting fell,
 Lord Wycliffe knows, and none so well.

XV.

“ ‘O'Neale it was, who, in despair,
 Robbed Mortham of his infant heir;
 He bred him in their nurture wild,
 And called him murdered Connal's child.
 Soon died the nurse; the clan believed
 What from their Chieftain they received.
 His purpose was, that ne'er again
 The boy should cross the Irish main;
 But, like his mountain sires, enjoy
 The woods and wastes of Clandeboy.
 Then on the land wild troubles came,
 And stronger Chieftains urged a claim,
 And wrested from the old man's hands
 His native towers, his father's lands.
 Unable then, amid the strife,
 To guard young Redmond's rights or life,
 Late and reluctant he restores
 The infant to his native shores,
 With goodly gifts and letters stored,
 With many a deep conjuring word,
 To Mortham and to Rokeby's Lord.
 Naught knew the clod of Irish earth,
 Who was the guide of Redmond's birth;
 But deemed his Chief's commands were laid
 On both, by both to be obeyed.
 How he was wounded by the way,
 I need not, and I list not say.'—

XVI.

“ ‘A wondrous tale! and, grant it true,
 What,’ Wycliffe answered, ‘might I do?
 Heaven knows, as willingly as now
 I raise the bonnet from my brow,
 Would I my kinsman’s manors fair,
 Restore to Mortham or his heir;
 But Mortham is distraught—O’Neale
 Has drawn for tyranny his steel,
 Malignant to our rightful cause,
 And trained in Rome’s delusive laws.
 Hark thee apart!’—They whispered long,
 Till Denzil’s voice grew bold and strong:—
 ‘My proofs! I never will,’ he said,
 ‘Show mortal man where they are laid.
 Nor hope discovery to foreclose,
 By giving me to feed the crows;
 For I have mates at large who know
 Where I am wont such toys to stow.
 Free me from peril and from band,
 These tablets are at thy command;
 Nor were it hard to form some train,
 To wile old Mortham o’er the main.
 Then, lunatic’s nor papist’s hand
 Should wrest from thine the goodly land.’—
 —‘I like thy wit,’ said Wycliffe, ‘well;
 But here in hostage shalt thou dwell.
 Thy son, unless **my** purpose err,
 May prove the trustier messenger.
 A scroll to Mortham shall he bear
 From me, and fetch these tokens rare.
 Gold shalt thou have, and that good store,
 And freedom, his commission o’er;
 But if his faith should chance to fail,
 The gibbet frees thee from the jail.’

XVII.

“ ‘Meshed in the net himself had twined,
 What subterfuge could Denzil find?
 He told me, with reluctant sigh,
 That hidden here the tokens lie;
 Conjured my swift return and aid,

By all he scoffed and disobeyed,
 And looked as if the noose were tied,
 And I the priest who left his side.
 This scroll for Mortham Wycliffe gave,
 Whom I must seek by Greta's wave
 Or in the hut where chief he hides,
 Where Thorsgill's forester resides.
 (Thence chanced it, wandering in the glade,
 That he descried our ambuscade.)
 I was dismissed as evening fell,
 And reached but now this rocky cell."—
 "Give Oswald's letter."—Bertram read,
 And tore it fiercely, shred by shred:—
 "All lies and villainy! to blind
 His noble kinsman's generous mind,
 And train him on from day to day,
 Till he can take his life away.—
 And now, declare thy purpose, youth,
 Nor dare to answer, save the truth!
 If aught I mark of Denzil's art,
 I'll tear the secret from thy heart!"—

XVIII.

"It needs not. I renounce," he said,
 "My tutor and his deadly trade,
 Fixed was my purpose to declare
 To Mortham, Redmond is his heir;
 To tell him in what risk he stands,
 And yield these tokens to his hands.
 Fixed was my purpose to atone,
 Far as I may, the evil done;
 And fixed it rests—if I survive
 This night, and leave this cave alive."—
 "And Denzil?"—"Let them ply the rack,
 Even till his joints and sinews crack!
 If Oswald tear him limb from limb,
 What ruth can Denzil claim from him,
 Whose thoughtless youth he led astray,
 And damned to this unhallowed way?
 He schooled me, faith and vows were vain:
 Now let my master reap his gain."—
 "True," answered Bertram, "tis his meed,
 There's retribution in the deed.

But thou—thou art not for our course,
 Hast fear, hast pity, hast remorse ;
 And he, with us the gale who braves,
 Must heave such cargo to the waves,
 Or lag with overloaded prore,
 While barks unburdened reach the shore.”

XIX.

He paused, and stretching him at length,
 Seemed to repose his bulky strength.
 Communing with his secret mind,
 As half he sat, and half reclined,
 One ample hand his forehead pressed,
 And one was dropped across his breast.
 The shaggy eyebrows deeper came
 Above his eyes of swarthy flame ;
 His lip of pride awhile forebore
 The haughty curve till then it wore ;
 The unaltered fierceness of his look
 A shade of darkened sadness took,—
 For dark and sad a presage pressed
 Resistlessly on Bertram's breast,—
 And when he spoke, his wonted tone,
 So fierce, abrupt, and brief, was gone.
 His voice was steady, low, and deep,
 Like distant waves, when breezes sleep ;
 And sorrow mixed with Edmund's fear
 Its low, unbroken depth to hear.

XX.

“Edmund, in thy sad tale I find
 The woe that warped my patron's mind ;
 'Twould wake the fountains of the eye
 In other men, but mine are dry.
 Mortham must never see the fool,
 That sold himself base Wycliffe's tool ;
 Yet less from thirst of sordid gain,
 Than to avenge supposed disdain.
 Say, Bertram rues his fault ;—a word,
 Till now, from Bertram never heard ;
 Say, too, that Mortham's Lord he prays
 To think but on their former days ;
 On Quariana's beach and rock,

On Cayo's bursting battle-shock,
 On Darien's sands and deadly dew,
 And on the dart Tlatzeca threw;
 Perchance my patron yet may hear
 More that may grace his comrade's bier.
 My soul hath felt a secret weight,
 A warning of approaching fate:
 A priest had said, 'Return, repent!'
 As well to bid that rock be rent.
 Firm as that flint I face mine end;
 My heart may burst, but cannot bend.

XXI.

"The dawning of my youth, with awe
 And prophecy, the Dalesmen saw;
 For over Redesdale it came,
 As bodeful as their beacon-flame.
 Edmund, thy years were scarcely mine,
 When, challenging the Clans of Tyne
 To bring their best my brand to prove,
 O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove;*
 But Tynedale, nor in tower nor town,
 Held champion meet to take it down.
 My noontide, India may declare;
 Like her fierce sun, I fired the air!
 Like him, to wood and cave bade fly
 Her natives from mine angry eye.
 Panama's maids shall long look pale
 When Risingham inspires the tale;

* This custom among the Redesdale and Tynedale Borderers is thus mentioned in the interesting *Life of Bernard Gilpin*. "One Sunday morning, coming to a church in those parts, before the people were assembled, he observed a glove hanging up, and was informed by the sexton, that it was meant as a challenge to any one who should take it down. Mr. Gilpin ordered the sexton to reach it him; but upon his utterly refusing to touch it, he took it down himself, and put it into his breast. When the people were assembled, he went into the pulpit, and, before he concluded his sermon, took occasion to rebuke them severely for these inhuman challenges. 'I hear,' said he, 'that one among you hath hanged up a glove, even in this sacred place, threatening to fight any one who taketh it down: see, I have taken it down;' and, pulling out the glove, he held it up to the congregation, and then showed them how unsuitable such savage practices were to the profession of Christianity, using such persuasives to mutual love as he thought would most affect them."—*Life of Bernard Gilpin*. Lond., 1753, 8vo. p. 177.

Chili's dark matron's long shall tame
 The froward child with Bertram's name.
 And now, my race of terror run,
 Mine be the eve of tropic sun!
 No pale gradations quench his ray,
 No twilight dews his wrath allay;
 With disk like battle-target red,
 He rushes to his burning bed,
 Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
 Then sinks at once—and all is night.—

XXII.

“Now to thy mission, Edmund. Fly,
 Seek Mortham out, and bid him hie
 To Richmond, where his troops are laid,
 And lend his force to Redmond's aid.
 Say, till he reaches Egliston,
 A friend will watch to guard his son.
 Now, fare thee well; for night draws on,
 And I would rest me here alone.”
 Despite his ill-dissembled fear,
 There swam in Edmund's eye a tear;
 A tribute to the courage high,
 Which stooped not in extremity,
 But strove, irregularly great,
 To triumph o'er approaching fate!
 Bertram beheld the dewdrop start,
 It almost touched his iron heart:—
 “I did not think there lived,” he said,
 “One who would tear for Bertram shed.”
 He loosened then his baldric's hold,
 A buckle broad of massive gold;—
 “Of all the spoil that paid his pains,
 But this with Risingham remains;
 And this, dear Edmund, thou shalt take,
 And wear it long for Bertram's sake.
 Once more—to Mortham speed amain;
 Farewell! and turn thee not again.”

XXIII.

The night has yielded to the morn,
 And far the hours of prime are worn.
 Oswald, who, since the dawn of day,

Had cursed his messenger's delay,
 Impatient questioned now his train,
 "Was Denzil's son returned again?"
 It chanced there answered of the crew,
 A menial, who young Edmund knew:
 "No son of Denzil this," he said;
 "A peasant boy from Winston glade,
 For song and minstrelsy renowned,
 And knavish pranks, the hamlets round."—
 "Not Denzil's son!—From Winston vale!—
 Then it was false, that specious tale;
 Or, worse—he hath dispatched the youth
 To show to Mortham's Lord its truth.
 Fool that I was!—but 'tis too late;
 This is the very turn of fate!—
 The tale, or true or false, relies
 On Denzil's evidence!—He dies!—
 Ho! Provost Marshal! instantly
 Lead Denzil to the gallows-tree!
 Allow him not a parting word;
 Short be the shrift, and sure the cord!
 Then let his gory head appall
 Marauders from the Castle-wall.
 Lead forth thy guard, that duty done,
 With best dispatch to Egliston.—
 Basil, tell Wilfrid he must straight
 Attend me at the Castle-gate."—

XXIV.

"Alas!" the old domestic said,
 And shook his venerable head,
 "Alas, my Lord! full ill to-day
 May my young master brook the way!
 The leech has spoke, with grave alarm,
 Of unseen hurt, of secret harm,
 Of sorrow lurking at the heart,
 That mars and lets his healing art."—
 "Tush, tell not me!—Romantic boys
 Pine themselves sick for airy toys.
 I will find cure for Wilfrid soon;
 Bid him for Egliston be boune,
 And quick! I hear the dull death-drum
 Tell Denzil's hour of fate is come."

He paused with scornful smile, and then
 Resumed his train of thought agen.
 "Now comes my fortune's crisis near!
 Entreaty boots not—instant fear,
 Naught else, can bend Matilda's pride,
 Or win her to be Wilfrid's bride.
 But when she sees the scaffold placed,
 With axe, and block, and headsman graced,
 And when she deems, that to deny
 Dooms Redmond and her sire to die,
 She must give way.—Then, were the line
 Of Rokeby once combined with mine,
 I gain the weather-gage of fate!
 If Mortham come, he comes too late,
 While I, thus allied and prepared,
 Bid him defiance to his beard.—
 —If she prove stubborn, shall I dare
 To drop the axe?—Soft! pause we there.
 Mortham still lives—yon youth may tell
 His tale—and Fairfax loves him well;—
 Else, wherefore should I now delay
 To sweep this Redmond from my way?
 But she to piety perforce
 Must yield.—Without there! Sound to horse."

XXV.

'Twas bustle in the court below,—
 "Mount, and march forward!"—Forth they go;
 Steeds neigh and trample all around,
 Steel rings, spears glimmer, trumpets sound.—
 Just then was sung his parting hymn;
 And Denzil turned his eyeballs dim,
 And, scarcely conscious what he sees,
 Follows the horsemen down the Tees;
 And scarcely conscious what he hears,
 The trumpets tingle in his ears.
 O'er the long bridge they're sweeping now,
 The van is hid by greenwood bough;
 But ere the rearward had passed o'er,
 Guy Denzil heard and saw no more!
 One stroke upon the Castle bell,
 To Oswald rung his dying knell.

XXVI.

O, for that pencil, erst profuse
Of chivalry's emblazoned hues,
That traced of old, in Woodstock bower,
The pageant of the Leaf and Flower,
And bodied forth the tourney high,
Held for the hand of Emily!
Then might I paint the tumult broad,
That to the crowded abbey flowed,
And poured, as with an ocean's sound,
Into the church's ample bound!
Then might I show each varying mien,
Exulting, woful, or serene;
Indifference, with his idiot stare,
And Sympathy, with anxious air,
Paint the dejected Cavalier,
Doubtful, disarmed, and sad of cheer;
And his proud foe, whose formal eye
Claimed conquest now and mastery;
And the brute crowd, whose envious zeal
Huzzas each turn of Fortune's wheel,
And loudest shouts when lowest lie
Exalted worth and station high.
Yet what may such a wish avail?
'Tis mine to tell an onward tale,
Hurrying, as best I can, along,
The hearers and the hasty song;—
Like traveller when approaching home,
Who sees the shades of evening come,
And must not now his course delay,
Or choose the fair, but winding way;
Nay, scarcely may his pace suspend,
Where o'er his head the wildings bend,
To bless the breeze that cools his brow,
Or snatch a blossom from the bough.

XXVII.

The reverend pile lay wild and waste,
Profaned, dishonored, and defaced.
Through storied lattices no more
In softened light the sunbeams pour,
Gilding the Gothic sculpture rich
Of shrine, and monument, and niche.

The Civil fury of the time
 Made sport of sacrilegious crime ;
 For dark Fanaticism rent
 Altar, and screen, and ornament,
 And peasant hands the tombs o'erthrew
 Of Bowes, of Rokeby, and Fitz-Hugh.
 And now was seen, unwonted sight,
 In holy walls a scaffold dight !
 Where once the priest, of grace divine
 Dealt to his flock the mystic sign ;
 There stood the block displayed, and there
 The headsman grim his hatchet bare ;
 And for the word of Hope and Faith,
 Resounded loud a doom of death.
 Thrice the fierce trumpet's breath was heard,
 And echoed thrice the herald's word,
 Dooming, for breach of martial laws,
 And treason to the Commons' cause,
 The Knight of Rokeby and O'Neale
 To stoop their heads to block and steel.
 The trumpets flourished high and shrill ;
 Then was a silence dead and still,
 And silent prayers to heaven were cast,
 And stifling sobs were bursting fast,
 Till from the crowd began to rise
 Murmurs of sorrow or surprise,
 And from the distant aisles there came
 Deep-muttered threats, with Wycliffe's name.

XXVIII.

But Oswald, guarded by his band,
 Powerful in evil, waved his hand,
 And bade Sedition's voice be dead,
 On peril of the murmurer's head.
 Then first his glance sought Rokeby's Knight ;
 Who gazed on the tremendous sight,
 As calm as if he came a guest
 To kindred Baron's feudal feast,
 As calm as if that trumpet-call
 Were summons to the bannered hall ;
 Firm in his loyalty he stood,
 And prompt to seal it with his blood.
 With downcast look drew Oswald nigh,—

He durst not cope with Rokeby's eye!--
 And said, with low and faltering breath,
 "Thou know'st the terms of life and death."
 The Knight then turned, and sternly smiled;
 "The maiden is mine only child,
 Yet shall my blessing leave her head,
 If with a traitor's son she wed."
 Then Redmond spoke: "The life of one
 Might thy malignity atone,
 On me be flung a double guilt!
 Spare Rokeby's blood, let mine be spilt!"
 Wycliffe had listened to his suit,
 But dread prevailed, and he was mute.

XXIX.

And now he pours his choice of fear
 In secret on Matilda's ear;
 "A union formed with me and mine,
 Insures the faith of Rokeby's line.
 Consent, and all this dread array,
 Like morning dream shall pass away!
 Refuse, and, by my duty pressed,
 I give the word—thou know'st the rest."
 Matilda, still and motionless,
 With terror heard the dread address,
 Pale as the sheeted maid who dies
 To hopeless love a sacrifice;
 Then wrung her hands in agony,
 And round her cast bewildered eye;
 Now on the scaffold glanced, and now
 On Wycliffe's unrelenting brow.
 She veiled her face, and, with a voice
 Scarce audible,—“I make my choice!
 Spare but their lives!—for aught beside,
 Let Wilfrid's doom my fate decide.
 He once was generous!”—As she spoke,
 Dark Wycliffe's joy in triumph broke:—
 “Wilfrid, where loitered ye so late?
 Why upon Basil rest thy weight?—
 Art spell-bound by enchanter's wand?—
 Kneel, kneel, and take her yielded hand;
 Thank her with raptures, simple boy!
 Should tears and trembling speak thy joy?”

“O hush, my sire! To prayer and tear
Of mine thou hast refused thine ear;
But now the awful hour draws on,
When truth must speak in loftier tone”

XXX.

He took Matilda's hand;—“Dear maid,
Couldst thou so injure me,” he said,
“Of thy poor friend so basely deem,
As blend with him this barbarous scheme?
Alas! my efforts made in vain,
Might well have saved this added pain.
But now, bear witness, earth and heaven,
That ne'er was hope to mortal given,
So twisted with the strings of life,
As this—to call Matilda wife!
I bid it now forever part,
And with the effort bursts my heart.”
His feeble frame was worn so low,
With wounds, with watching, and with woe,
That nature could no more sustain
The agony of mental pain.
He kneeled—his lip her hand had pressed,—
Just then he felt the stern arrest.
Lower and lower sunk his head,—
They raised him,—but the life was fled!
Then, first alarmed, his sire and train
Tried every aid, but tried in vain.
The soul, too soft its ills to bear,
Had left our mortal hemisphere,
And sought in better world the meed
To blameless life by Heaven decreed.

XXXI.

The wretched sire beheld, aghast,
With Wilfrid all his projects past:
All turned and centred on his son,
On Wilfrid all—and he was gone.
“And I am childless now,” he said;
“Childless, through that relentless maid!
A lifetime's arts, in vain essayed,
Are bursting on their artist's head!—
Here lies my Wilfrid dead—and there

Comes hated Mortham for his heir,
 Eager to knit in happy band
 With Rokeby's heiress Redmond's hand.
 And shall their triumph soar o'er all
 The schemes deep-laid to work their fall?
 No!—deeds, which prudence might not dare,
 Appall not vengeance and despair.
 The murderess weeps upon his bier—
 I'll change to real that feigned tear!
 They all shall share destruction's shock;—
 Ho! lead the captives to the block!"—
 But ill his Provost could divine
 His feelings, and forbore the sign.
 "Slave! to the block!—or I, or they,
 Shall face the judgment-seat this day!"

XXXII.

The outmost crowd have heard a sound,
 Like horse's hoof on hardened ground;
 Nearer it came, and yet more near,—
 The very deaths-men paused to hear.
 'Tis in the churchyard now—the tread
 Hath waked the dwelling of the dead!
 Fresh sod, and old sepulchral stone,
 Return the tramp in varied tone.
 All eyes upon the gateway hung,
 When through the Gothic arch there sprung
 A horseman armed, at headlong speed—
 Sable his cloak, his plume, his steed.
 Fire from the flinty floor was spurned,
 The vaults unwonted clang returned!—
 One instant's glance around he threw—
 From saddlebow his pistol drew.
 Grimly determined was his look!
 His charger with the spurs he strook—
 All scattered backward as he came,
 For all knew Bertram Risingham!
 Three bounds that noble courser gave;
 The first has reached the central nave,
 The second cleared the chancel wide,
 The third—he was at Wycliffe's side.
 Full levelled at the Baron's head,
 Rung the report—the bullet sped—

And to his long account, and last,
 Without a groan, dark Oswald passed!
 All was so quick, that it might seem
 A flash of lightning, or a dream.

XXXIII.

While yet the smoke the deed conceals,
 Bertram his ready charger wheels;
 But floundered on the pavement-floor
 The steed, and down the rider bore,
 And, bursting in the headlong sway,
 The faithless saddle-girths gave way.
 'Twas while he toiled him to be freed,
 And with the rein to raise the steed,
 That from amazement's iron trance
 All Wycliffe's soldiers waked at once.
 Sword, halberd, musket-butt, their blows
 Hailed upon Bertram as he rose;
 A score of pikes, with each a wound,
 Bore down and pinned him to the ground;
 But still his struggling force he rears,
 'Gainst hacking brands and stabbing spears,
 Thrice from assailants shook him free,
 Once gained his feet, and twice his knee.
 By tenfold odds oppressed at length,
 Despite his struggles and his strength,
 He took a hundred mortal wounds,
 As mute as fox 'mongst mangling hounds,
 And when he died, his parting groan
 Had more of laughter than of moan!
 —They gazed, as when a lion dies,
 And hunters scarcely trust their eyes,
 But bend their weapons on the slain,
 Lest the grim king should rouse again!
 Then blow and insult some renewed,
 And from the trunk the head had hewed,
 But Basil's voice the deed forbade;
 A mantle o'er the corse he laid:—
 "Fell as he was in act and mind,
 He left no bolder heart behind:
 Then give him, for a soldier meet,
 A soldier's cloak for winding-sheet."

XXXIV.

No more of death and dying pang,
No more of trump and bugle clang,
Though through the sounding woods there come
Banner and bugle, trump and drum,
Armed with such powers as well had freed
Young Redmond at his utmost need,
And backed with such a band of horse,
As might less ample powers enforce ;
Possessed of every proof and sign
That gave an heir to Mortham's line,
And yielded to a father's arms
An image of his Edith's charms,—
Mortham is come, to hear and see
Of this strange morn the history.
What saw he?—not the church's floor,
Cumbered with dead and stained with gore ;
What heard he? not the clamorous crowd,
That shout their gratulations loud :
Redmond he saw and heard alone,
Clasped him, and sobbed, "My son! my son!"—

XXXV.

This chanced upon a summer morn,
When yellow waved the heavy corn :
But when brown August o'er the land
Called forth the reaper's busy band,
A gladsome sight the silvan road
From Egliston to Mortham showed.
A while the hardy rustic leaves
The task to bind and pile the sheaves,
And maids their sickles fling aside,
To gaze on bridegroom and on bride ;
And childhood's wondering group draws near,
And from the gleaner's hand the ear
Drops, while she folds them for a prayer
And blessing on the lovely pair.
'Twas then the Maid of Rokeby gave
Her plighted troth to Redmond brave ;
And Teesdale can remember yet
How Fate to Virtue paid her debt,
And, for their troubles, bade them prove
A lengthened life of peace and love.

Time and Tide had thus their sway,
Yielding, like an April day,
Smiling noon for sullen morrow,
Years of joy for hours of sorrow!

Ballads, Lyrical Pieces, and Songs.

GLENFINLAS,

OR

LORD RONALD'S CORONACH.

[The tradition upon which the following stanzas are founded, runs thus: While two Highland hunters were passing the night in a solitary *bothy*, (a hut built for the purpose of hunting), and making merry over their venison and whisky, one of them expressed a wish that they had pretty lasses, to complete their party. The words were scarcely uttered, when two beautiful young women, habited in green, entered the hut, dancing and singing. One of the hunters was seduced by the syren, who attached herself particularly to him, to leave the hunt: the other remained, and, suspicious of the fair seducers, continued to play upon a trumpet, or Jew's-harp, some strain consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Day at length came, and the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, he found the bones of his unfortunate friend; who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend, into whose toils he had fallen. The place was from thence called, *The Glen of the Green Women*.]

“For them the viewless forms of air obey,
Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair;
They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
And heartless oft, like moody madness, stare,
To see the phantom-train their secret work prepare.”

“O HONE a rie’! O hone a rie’!*
The pride of Albin’s line is o’er,
And fallen Glenartney’s stateliest tree;
We ne’er shall see Lord Ronald more!

O, sprung from great Macgillianore,
The chief that never feared a foe,
How matchless was thy broad claymore,
How deadly thine unerring bow!

* *O hone a rie’* signifies—“Alas for the prince, or chief.”

Well can the Saxon widows tell,
How on the Teith's resounding shore,
The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
As down from Lenny's pass you bore.

But o'er his hills, on festal day,
How blazed Lord Ronald's beltane-tree,
While youths and maids the light strathspey
So nimbly danced, with Highland glee.

Cheered by the strength of Ronald's shell,
E'en age forgot his tresses hoar ;
But now the loud lament we swell,
O, ne'er to see Lord Ronald more !

From distant isles a chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald's halls to find,
And chase with him the dark-brown game
That bounds o'er Albin's hills of wind.

'Twas Moy ; whom, in Columba's isle,
The seer's prophetic spirit found,
As, with a minstrel's fire the while,
He waked his harp's harmonious sound.

Full many a spell to him was known,
Which wandering spirits shrink to hear ;
And many a lay of potent tone,
Was never meant for mortal ear.

For there, 'tis said, in mystic mood,
High converse with the dead they hold,
And oft espy the fated shroud,
That shall the future corpse enfold.

O, so it fell, that on a day,
To rouse the red deer from their den,
The Chiefs have ta'en their distant way,
And scoured the deep Glenfinlas glen.

No vassals wait, their sports to aid,
To watch their safety, deck their board ;
Their simple dress, the Highland plaid
Their trusty guard, the Highland sword.

Three summer days, through brake and dell,
 Their whistling shafts successful flew ;
 And still, when dewy evening fell,
 The quarry to their hut they drew.

In gray Glenfinlas' deepest nook
 The solitary cabin stood,
 Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,
 Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
 When three successive days had flown ;
 And summer mist in dewy balm
 Steeped heathy bank, and mossy stone.

The moon, half hid in silvery flakes,
 Afar her dubious radiance shed,
 Quivering on Katrine's distant lakes,
 And resting on Benledi's head.

Now in their hut, in social guise,
 Their silvan fare the Chiefs enjoy ;
 And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
 As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

—“ What lack we here to crown our bliss,
 While thus the pulse of joy beats high ?
 What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
 Her panting breath, and melting eye ?

“ To chase the deer of yonder shades,
 This morning left their father's pile
 The fairest of our mountain maids,
 The daughters of the proud Glengyle.

“ Long have I sought sweet Mary's heart,
 And dropped the tear, and heaved the sigh :
 But vain the lover's wily art
 Beneath a sister's watchful eye.

“ But thou mayst teach that guardian fair,
 While far with Mary I am flown,
 Of other hearts to cease her care,
 And find it hard to guard her own.

“Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
 The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
 Unmindful of her charge and me,
 Hang on thy notes, 'twixt tear and smile.

“Or, if she choose a melting tale,
 All underneath the greenwood bough,
 Will good St. Oran's rule prevail,
 Stern huntsman of the rigid brow?”

—“Since Enrick's fight, since Morna's death
 No more on me shall rapture rise,
 Responsive to the panting breath,
 Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.

“E'en then, when o'er the heath of woe,
 Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
 I bade my harp's wild wailings flow,
 On me the Seer's sad spirit came.

“The last dread curse of angry Heaven,
 With ghastly sights and sounds of woe,
 To dash each glimpse of joy, was given—
 The gift, the future ill to know.

“The bark thou saw'st, yon summer morn,
 So gaily part from Oban's bay,
 My eye beheld her dashed and torn,
 Far on the rocky Colonsay.

“Thy Fergus too—thy sister's son,
 Thou saw'st, with pride, the gallant's power,
 As marching 'gainst the Lord of Downe,
 He left the skirts of huge Benmore.

“Thou only saw'st their tartans* wave,
 As down Benvoirlich's side they wound,
 Heard'st but the pibroch, answering brave
 To many a target clanking round.

“I heard the groans, I marked the tears,
 I saw the wound his bosom bore,
 When on the serried Saxon spears
 He poured his clan's resistless roar.

* *Tartans*—The full Highland dress, made of the checkered stuff so termed.

“And thou, who bid'st me think of bliss,
 And bid'st my heart awake to glee,
 And court, like thee, the wanton kiss,—
 That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee!

“I see the death-damps chill thy brow;
 I hear thy Warning Spirit cry;
 The corpse-lights dance—they're gone, and now--!
 No more is given to gifted eye!”——

— Alone enjoy thy dreary dreams,
 Sad prophet of the evil hour!
 Say, should we scorn joy's transient beams,
 Because to-morrow's storm may lour?

“Or false, or sooth, thy words of woe,
 Clangillian's Chieftain ne'er shall fear;
 His blood shall bound at rapture's glow,
 Though doomed to stain the Saxon spear.

“E'en now, to meet me in yon dell,
 My Mary's buskins brush the dew.”
 He spoke, nor bade the chief farewell,
 But called his dogs, and gay withdrew.

Within an hour returned each hound;
 In rushed the rousers of the deer;
 They howled in melancholy sound,
 Then closely couch beside the Seer.

No Ronald yet; though midnight came,
 And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
 As, bending o'er the dying flame,
 He fed the watch-fire's quivering gleams.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
 And sudden cease their moaning howl;
 Close pressed to Moy, they mark their fears
 By shivering limbs and stifled growl.

Untouched, the harp began to ring,
 As softly, slowly, ope'd the door;
 And shook responsive every string,
 As light a footstep pressed the floor.

And, by the watch-fire's glimmering light,
 Close by the Minstrel's side was seen

A huntress maid, in beauty bright,
All dropping wet her robes of green.

All dropping wet her garments seem ;
Chilled was her cheek, her bosom bare
As, bending o'er the dying gleam,
She wrung the moisture from her hair.

With maiden blush she softly said,
"O gentle huntsman, hast thou seen,
In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
A lovely maid in vest of green :

"With her a Chief in Highland pride—
His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
The mountain dirk adorns his side,
Far on the wind his tartans flow ?"

"And who art thou? and who are they?"
All ghastly gazing, Moy replied :
"And why, beneath the moon's pale ray,
Dare ye thus roam Glenfinlas' side?"

"Where wild Loch Katrine pours her tide,
Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle,
Our father's towers o'erhang her side,
The castle of the bold Glengyle.

"To chase the dun Glenfinlas deer,
Our woodland course this morn we bore,
And haply met, while wandering here,
The son of great Macgillianore.

"O aid me, then, to seek the pair,
Whom, loitering in the woods, I lost ;
Alone I dare not venture there,
Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost."

"Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there ;
Then, first, my own sad vow to keep,
Here will I pour my midnight prayer,
Which still must rise when mortals sleep."

"O first, for pity's gentle sake,
Guide a lone wanderer on her way!
For I must cross the haunted brake,
And reach my father's towers ere day."

“First, three times tell each Ave-bead,
And thrice a Pater-noster say;
Then kiss with me the holy rede:
So shall we safely wend our way.”

“O shame to knighthood, strange and foul!
Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
Which best befits thy sullen vow.

“Not so, by high Dunlathmon's fire,
Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
When gaily rung thy raptured lyre
To wanton Morna's melting eye.”

Wild stared the Minstrel's eyes of flame,
And high his sable locks arose,
And quick his color went and came,
As fear and rage alternate rose.

“And thou! when by the blazing oak
I lay, to her and love resigned,
Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke;
Or sailed ye on the midnight wind?

“Not thine a race of mortal blood,
Nor old Glengyle's pretended line:
Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood,
Thy sire, the Monarch of the Mine.”

He muttered thrice St. Oran's rhyme,
And thrice St. Fillan's powerful prayer;
Then turned him to the eastern clime,
And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And, bending o'er his harp, he flung
His wildest witch-notes on the wind;
And loud, and high, and strange, they rung
As many a magic change they find.

Tall waxed the Spirit's altering form,
Till to the roof her stature grew;
Then, mingling with the rising storm,
With one wild yell, away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear:
The slender hut in fragments flew;

But not a lock of Moy's loose hair
Was waved by wind, or wet by dew.

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise;
High o'er the Minstrel's head they sail,
And die amid the northern skies.

The voice of thunder shook the wood,
As ceased the more than mortal yell;
And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
Upon the hissing firebrands fell.

Next, dropped from high a mangled arm;
The fingers strained a half-drawn blade:
And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.

Oft o'er that head, in battling field,
Streamed the proud crest of high Benmore;
That arm the broad claymore could wield,
Which dyed the Teith with Saxon gore.

Woe to Moneira's sullen rills!
Woe to Glenfinlas' dreary glen!
There never son of Albin's hills
Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen!

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
At noon shall shun that sheltering den,
Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
The wayward Ladies of the Glen.

And we—behind the chieftain's shield,
No more shall we in safety dwell;
None leads the people to the field—
And we the loud lament must swell.

O hone a rie'! O hone a rie'!
The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
And fallen Glenartney's stateliest tree;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more!

THE EVE OF SAINT JOHN.

THE Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day,
He spurred his courser on,
Without stop or stay, down the rocky way
That leads to Brotherstone.

He went not with the bold Buccleuch,
His banner broad to rear;
He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack* was braced, and his helmet was
laced,
And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore;
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron returned in three days' space,
And his looks were sad and sour;
And weary was his courser's pace,
As he reached his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor
Ran red with English blood;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch,
'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood.

Yet was his helmet hacked and hewed,
His acton pierced and tore;
His axe and his dagger with blood imbrued,
But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage,
He held him close and still;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
His name was English Will.

* The plate-jack is coat-armor; the vaunt-brace, or wam-brace, armor for the body; the sperthe, a battle-axe.

“Come thou hither, my little foot-page;
Come hither to my knee;
Thou art young, and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

“Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true!
Since I from Smaylho'me tower have been,
What did thy lady do?”

“My lady, each night, sought the lonely light
That burns on the wild Watchfold;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.

“The bittern clamored from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill;
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross,
To the eiry beacon hill.

“I watched her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone;
No watchman stood by the dreary flame;
It burned all alone.

“The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might! an armed Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

And many a word that warlike lord
Did speak to my lady there;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

“The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain blast was still,
As again I watched the secret pair,
On the lonesome beacon hill.

“And I heard her name in the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve;
And say, ‘Come this night to thy lady's bower;
Ask no bold Baron's leave.

““He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch;
His lady is all alone;

The door she'll undo to her knight so true,
On the eve of good St. John.'

"I cannot come; I must not come;
I dare not come to thee;
On the eve of St. John I must wander alone:
In thy bower I may not be.'

"Now, out on thee, faint-hearted knight!
Thou shouldst not say me nay;
For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet,
Is worth the whole summer's day.

"And I'll chain the blood-hound, and the warder
shall not sound,
And rushes shall be strewed on the stair;
So, by the black rood-stone,* and by holy St. John,
I conjure thee, my love, to be there!'

"Though the blood-hound be mute, and the rush
beneath my foot,
And the warder his bugle should not blow,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in the chamber to the east,
And my footstep he would know.'

"O fear not the priest who sleepeth to the east!
For to Dryburgh the way he has ta'en;
And there to say mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slayne.'

"He turned him around, and grimly he frowned;
Then he laughed right scornfully—
'He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that knight,
May as well say mass for me.

"At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have
power,
In thy chamber will I be.'—
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,
And no more did I see."—

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high;

"Now, tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die!"

* The black rood of Melrose was a crucifix of black marble, and of superior sanctity.

“His arms shone full bright in the beacon’s red light:
His plume it was scarlet and blue;
On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew.”

“Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page,
Loud dost thou lie to me!
For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mould,
All under the Eildon-tree.”*

“Yet hear but my word, my noble lord!
For I heard her name his name;
And that lady bright, she called the knight
Sir Richard of Coldinghame.”

The bold Baron’s brow then changed, I trow,
From high blood-red to pale—
“The grave is deep and dark—and the corpse is stiff
and stark—
So I may not trust thy tale.

“Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain.

“The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drowned the name;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do
sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame!”

He passed the court-gate, and he ope’d the tower-grate,
And he mounted the narrow stair
To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on her
wait,
He found his lady fair.

The lady sat in mournful mood;
Looked over hill and dale;
Over Tweed’s fair flood, and Mertoun’s wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

“Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!”
“Now hail, thou Baron true!

* Eildon-tree is said to be the spot where Thomas the Rhymer uttered his prophecies.

What news, what news, from Ancram fight?
 What news from the bold Buccleuch?"

"The Ancram Moor is red with gore,
 For many a southron fell;
 And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore
 To watch our beacons well."

The lady blushed red, but nothing she said;
 Nor added the Baron a word:
 Then she stepped down the stair to her chamber fair,
 And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourned, and the Baron tossed and
 turned,
 And oft to himself he said—
 "The worms around him creep, and his bloody grave
 is deep
 It cannot give up the dead!"

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
 The night was well-nigh done,
 When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
 On the eve of good St. John.

The lady looked through the chamber fair,
 By the light of a dying flame;
 And she was aware of a knight stood there—
 Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

"Alas! away, away!" she cried,
 "For the holy Virgin's sake!"
 "Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
 But, lady, he will not awake.

"By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
 In bloody grave have I lain;
 The mass and the death-prayer are said for me,
 But, lady, they are said in vain.

"By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand,
 Most foully slain I fell;
 And my restless sprite on the beacon's height,
 For a space is doomed to dwell.

"At our trysting-place,* for a certain space
 I must wander to and fro;

* *Trysting-place*—Place of rendezvous.

But I had not had power to come to thy bower,
Hadst thou not conjured me so."

Love mastered fear—her brow she crossed;

"How, Richard, hast thou sped?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost?"

The Vision shook his head!

"Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life,

So bid thy lord believe:

That lawless love is guilt above,

This awful sign receive."

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam;

His right upon her hand:

The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,

For it scorched like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,

Remains on that board impressed;

And for evermore that lady wore

A covering on her wrist.

There is a Nun in Dryburgh bower,

Ne'er looks upon the sun:

There is a Monk in Melrose tower,

He speaketh word to none.

That Nun, who ne'er beholds the day,

That Monk, who speaks to none—

That Nun was Smaylho'me's Lady **gay**,

That Monk the bold Baron.

CADYOW CASTLE;

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

LADY ANNE HAMILTON.

[In detailing the death of the regent Murray, which is made the subject of the following ballad, it would be injustice to my reader to use other words than those of Dr. Robertson, whose account of that memorable event forms a beautiful piece of historical painting.

“Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh was the person who committed this barbarous action. He had been condemned to death soon after the battle of Langside, as we have already related, and owed his life to the regent’s clemency. But part of his estate had been bestowed upon one of the regent’s favorites, who seized his house, and turned out his wife naked, in a cold night, into the open fields, where, before next morning, she became furiously mad. This injury made a deeper impression on him than the benefit he had received, and from that moment he vowed to be revenged of the regent. Party rage strengthened and inflamed his private resentment. His kinsmen, the Hamiltons, applauded the enterprise. The maxims of that age justified the most desperate course he could take to obtain vengeance. He followed the regent for some time, and watched for an opportunity to strike the blow. He resolved, at last, to wait till his enemy should arrive at Linlithgow, through which he was to pass, in his way from Stirling to Edinburgh. He took his stand in a wooden gallery, which had a window towards the street; spread a feather bed on the floor, to hinder the noise of his feet from being heard; hung up a black cloth behind him, that his shadow might not be observed from without; and, after all this preparation, calmly expected the regent’s approach, who had lodged, during the night, in a house not far distant. Some indistinct information of the danger which threatened him, had been conveyed to the regent, and he paid so much regard to it, that he resolved to return by the same gate through which he had entered, and to fetch a compass round the town. But, as the crowd about the gate was great, and he himself unacquainted with fear, he proceeded directly along the street; and the throng of people obliging him to move very slowly, gave the assassin time to take so true an aim, that he shot him, with a single bullet, through the lower part of his belly, and killed the horse of a gentleman who rode on his other side. His followers instantly endeavored to break into the house whence the blow had come; but they found the door strongly barricaded, and, before it could be forced open, Hamilton had mounted a fleet horse, which stood ready for him at a back passage, and was got far beyond their reach. The regent died the same night of his wound.”—*History of Scotland*, book v.]

WHEN princely Hamilton's abode
 Ennobled Cadyow's Gothic towers,
 The song went round, the goblet flowed,
 And revel sped the laughing hours.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
 So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
 And echoed light the dancer's bound,
 As mirth and music cheered the hall.

But Cadyow's towers, in ruins laid,
 And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er,
 Thrill to the music of the shade,
 Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
 You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
 And tune my harp, of Border frame,
 On the wild banks of Evandale.

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
 From pleasure's lighter scenes, canst turn,
 To draw oblivion's pall aside,
 And mark the long-forgotten urn.

Then, noble maid! at thy command,
 Again the crumbled halls shall rise;
 Lo! as on Evan's banks we stand,
 The past returns—the present flies.

Where, with the rock's wood-covered side,
 Were blended late the ruins green,
 Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
 And feudal banners flaunt between:

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
 Was shagged with thorn and tangling sloe,
 The ashler buttress braves its force,
 And ramparts frown in battled row.

'Tis night—the shade of keep and spire
 Obscurely dance on Evan's stream,
 And on the wave the warder's fire
 Is checkering the moonlight beam.

Fades slow their light; the east is gray;
 The weary warder leaves his tower;
 Steeds snort; uncoupled stag-hounds bay,
 And merry hunters quit the bower.

The drawbridge falls—they hurry out—
 Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
 As, dashing o'er the jovial rout
 Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.

First of his troop, the Chief rode on:
 His shouting merry-men throng behind;
 The steed of princely Hamilton
 Was fleetier than the mountain wind.

From the thick copse the roebucks bound,
 The startling red-deer scuds the plain;
 For the hoarse bugle's warrior-sound
 Has roused their mountain haunts again.

Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
 Whose limbs a thousand years have worn,
 What sullen roar comes down the gale,
 And drowns the hunter's pealing horn?

Mightiest of all the beasts of chase,
 That roam in woody Caledon,
 Crashing the forest in his race,
 The mountain bull comes thundering on.

Fierce, on the hunters' quivered band,
 He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
 Spurns, with black hoof and horn, the sand,
 And tosses high his mane of snow.

Aimed well, the Chieftain's lance has flown;
 Struggling in blood the savage lies;
 His roar is sunk in hollow groan—
 Sound, merry huntsmen! sound the *pryse!**

'Tis noon—against the the knotted oak
 The hunters rest the idle spear;
 Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
 Where yeomen dight the woodland cheer.

* *Pryse*—The note blown at the death of the game.

Proudly the Chieftain marked his clan,
 On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
 Yet missed his eye the boldest man,
 That bore the name of Hamilton.

“Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
 Still wont our weal and woe to share?
 Why comes he not our sport to grace?
 Why shares he not our hunter’s fare?”

Stern Claud replied, with darkening face,
 (Gray Paisley’s haughty lord was he)
 “At merry feast, or buxom chase,
 No more the warrior shalt thou see.

“Few suns have set, since Woodhouselee
 Saw Bothwellhaugh’s bright goblets foam,
 When to his hearths, in social glee,
 The war-worn soldier turned him home.

“There, wan from her maternal throes,
 His Margaret, beautiful and mild,
 Sate in her bower, a pallid rose,
 And peaceful nursed her new-born child.

“O change accursed! past are those days;
 False Murray’s ruthless spoilers came,
 And, for the hearth’s domestic blaze,
 Ascends destruction’s volumed flame.

“What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
 Where mountain Eske through woodland flows,
 Her arms enfold a shadowy child—
 Oh, is it she, the pallid rose?”

“The wildered traveller sees her glide,
 And hears her feeble voice with awe—
 ‘Revenge,’ she cries, ‘on Murray’s pride!
 And woe for injured Bothwellhaugh!’”

He ceased—and cries of rage and grief
 Burst mingling from the kindred band,
 And half arose the kindling Chief,
 And half unsheathed his Arran brand.

But who, o’er bush, o’er stream, and rock,
 Rides headlong, with resistless speed,

Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke
Drives to the leap his jaded steed ;

Whose cheek is pale, whose eyeballs glare,
As one, some visioned sight that saw,
Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair?—
— 'Tis he! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh!

From gory selle,* and reeling steed,
Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound,
And, reeking from the recent deed,
He dashed his carbine on the ground.

Sternly he spoke—" 'Tis sweet to hear,
In good greenwood, the bugle blown ;
But sweeter, to Revenge's ear,
To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

" Your slaughtered quarry proudly trode,
At dawning morn, o'er dale and down,
But prouder base-born Murray rode
Through old Linlithgow's crowded town.

" From the wild Border's humbled side,
In haughty triumph, marched he,
While Knox relaxed his bigot pride,
And smiled the traitorous pomp to see.

" But, can stern Power, with all his vaunt,
Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare,
The settled heart of Vengeance daunt,
Or change the purpose of Despair?

" With hackbut bent,† my secret stand,
Dark as the purposed deed, I chose,
And marked, where, mingling in his band,
Trooped Scottish pikes and English bows.

" Dark Morton, girt with many a spear,
Murder's foul minion, led the van ;
And clashed their broadswords in the rear,
The wild Macfarlanes' plaided clan.

" Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,
Obsequious at their Regent's rein,

* *Selle*—Saddle. A word used by Spenser and other authors.

† *Hackbut bent*—Gun-cocked.

And haggard Lindesay's iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.

"Mid pennoned spears, a steely grove,
Proud Murray's plumage floated high;
Scarce could his trampling charger move,
So close the minions crowded nigh.

"From the raised visor's shade, his eye,
Dark-rolling, glanced the ranks along,
And his steel truncheon, waved on high,
Seemed marshalling the iron throng.

"But yet his saddened brow confessed
A passing shade of doubt and awe;
Some fiend was whispering in his breast,
'Beware of injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"The death-shot parts—the charger springs—
Wild rises tumult's startling roar!—
And Murray's plummy helmet rings—
—Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

"What joy the raptured youth can feel,
To hear her love the loved one tell—
Or he, who broaches on his steel
The wolf, by whom his infant fell!

"But dearer to my injured eye,
To see in dust proud Murray roll;
And mine was ten times trebled joy
To hear him groan his felon soul.

"My Margaret's spectre glided near;
With pride her bleeding victim saw;
And shrieked in his death-deafened ear,
'Remember injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault!
Spread to the wind thy bannered tree!
Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow!—
Murray is fallen, and Scotland free."

Vaults every warrior to his steed;
Loud bugles join their wild acclaim—
"Murray is fallen, and Scotland freed!
Couch, Arran! couch thy spear of flame!"

But, see! the Minstrel vision fails—
 The glimmering spears are seen no more;
 The shouts of war die on the gales,
 Or sink in Evan's lonely roar.

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
 The blackbird whistles down the vale,
 And sunk in ivied ruins lie
 The bannered towers of Evandale.

For chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
 And Vengeance, shouting o'er the slain,
 Lo! high-born Beauty rules the steed,
 Or graceful guides the silken rein.

And long may Peace and Pleasure own
 The maids, who list the Minstrel's tale;
 Nor e'er a ruder guest be known
 On the fair banks of Evandale.

THE GRAY BROTHER.

A FRAGMENT.

[THE tradition, upon which this fragment is founded, regards a house, upon the barony of Gilmerton, near Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian. This building, now called Gilmerton Grange, was formerly named Burndale, from the following tragic adventure. The barony of Gilmerton belonged, of yore, to a gentleman, named Heron, who had one beautiful daughter. This young lady was seduced by the abbot of Newbattle, a richly endowed abbey, upon the banks of the South Esk, now a seat of the Marquis of Lothian. Heron came to the knowledge of this circumstance, and learned, also, that the lovers carried on their guilty intercourse by the contrivance of the lady's nurse, who lived at his house, of Gilmerton Grange, or Burndale. He formed a resolution of bloody vengeance, undeterred by the supposed sanctity of the clerical character, or by the stronger claims of natural affection. Choosing, therefore, a dark and windy night, when the objects of his vengeance were engaged in a stolen interview, he set fire to a stack of dried thorns, and other combustibles, which he had caused to be piled against the house, and reduced to a pile of glowing ashes the dwelling, with all its inmates.]

The scene, with which the ballad opens, was suggested by the following curious passage, extracted from the Life of Alexander Peden, one of the wandering and persecuted teachers of the sect of Cameronians, during the reign of Charles II., and his successor, James. "About the same time he (Peden) came to Andrew Normand's house, in the parish of Alloway, in the shire of Ayr, being to preach at night in his barn. After he came in, he halted a little, leaning upon a chair-back, with his face covered; when he lifted up his head, he said, 'There are in this house that I have not one word of salvation unto;' he halted a little again, saying, 'This is strange, that the devil will not go out, that we may begin our work!' Then there was a woman went out, ill looked upon almost all her life, and to her dying hour, for a witch, with many presumptions of the same. It escaped me, in the former passages, that John Muirhead (whom I have often mentioned) told me, that when he came from Ireland to Galloway, he was at family-worship, and giving some notes upon the Scripture read, when a very ill-looking man came, and sate down within the door, at the back of the *hallan* (partition of the cottage): immediately he halted, and said, 'There is some unhappy body just now come into this house. I charge him to go out, and not stop my mouth!' The person went out, and he *insisted* (went on), yet he saw him neither come in nor go out."—*The Life and Prophecies of Mr. Alexander Peden, late Minister of the Gospel at New Glenluce, in Galloway, part ii. sec. 26.*]

THE Pope he was saying the high, high mass,
 All on Saint Peter's day,
 With the power to him given, by the saints in heaven,
 To wash men's sins away.

The Pope he was saying the blessed mass,
 And the people kneeled around;
 And from each man's soul his sins did pass,
 As he kissed the holy ground.

And all, among the crowded throng,
 Was still, both limb and tongue,
 While through vaulted roof, and aisles aloof,
 The holy accents rung.

At the holiest word he quivered for fear,
 And faltered in the sound—
 And, when he would the chalice rear,
 He dropped it on the ground.

"The breath of one, of evil deed,
 Pollutes our sacred day;
 He has no portion in our creed,
 No part in what I say.

"A being, whom no blessed word
 To ghostly peace can bring;

A wretch, at whose approach abhorred,
Recoils each holy thing.

“Up, up, unhappy! haste, arise!
My adjuration fear!
I charge thee not to stop my voice,
Nor longer tarry here!”

Amid them all a Pilgrim kneeled,
In gown of sackcloth gray:
Far journeying from his native field,
He first saw Rome that day.

For forty days and nights so drear,
I ween he had not spoke,
And, save with bread and water clear,
His fast he ne'er had broke.

Amid the penitential flock,
Seemed none more bent to pray,
But, when the Holy Father spoke,
He rose, and went his way.

Again unto his native land
His weary course he drew,
To Lothian's fair and fertile strand,
And Pentland's mountains blue.

His unblest feet his native seat,
Mid Eske's fair woods, regain;
Through woods more fair no stream more sweet
Rolls to the eastern main.

And Lords to meet the Pilgrim came,
And vassals bent the knee;
For all 'mid Scotland's chiefs of fame,
Was none more famed than he.

And boldly for his country still,
In battle he had stood,
Aye, e'en when, on the banks of Till,
Her noblest poured their blood.

Sweet are the paths, O, passing sweet!
By Eske's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, through copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun.

There the rapt poet's step may rove,
And yield the muse the day;
There Beauty, led by timid Love,
May shun the tell-tale ray;

From that fair dome, where suit is paid
By blast of bugle free,
To Auchendinny's hazel glade,
And haunted Woodhouselee.

Who knows not Melville's beechy grove
And Roslin's rocky glen,
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,
And classic Hawthornden?

Yet never a path, from day to day,
The Pilgrim's footsteps range,
Save but the solitary way
To Burndale's ruined Grange.

A woful place was that, I ween,
As sorrow could desire;
For, nodding to the fall was each crumbling wall,
And the roof was scathed with fire.

It fell upon a summer's eve,
While, on Carnethy's head,
The last faint gleams of the sun's low beams
Had streaked the gray with red;

And the convent bell did vespers tell,
Newbattle's oaks among,
And mingled with the solemn knell
Our Lady's evening song:

The heavy knell, the choir's faint swell,
Came slowly down the wind,
And on the Pilgrim's ear they fell,
As his wonted path he did find.

Deep sunk in thought, I ween, he was,
Nor ever raised his eye,
Until he came to that dreary place,
Which did all in ruins lie.

He gazed on the walls, so scathed with fire,
With many a bitter groan—

And there was aware of a Gray Friar,
Resting him on a stone.

“Now, Christ thee save!” said the Gray Brother,
“Some pilgrim thou seem’st to be;”
But in sore amaze did Lord Albert gaze,
Nor answer again made he.

“O come ye from east, or come ye from west,
Or bring reliques from over the sea,
Or come ye from the shrine of St. James the divine,
Or St. John of Beverley?”

“I come not from the shrine of St. James the divine,
Nor bring reliques from over the sea;
I bring but a curse from our father, the Pope,
Which forever will cling to me.”

“Now, woful Pilgrim, say not so!
But kneel thee down by me,
And shrive thee so clean of thy deadly sin,
That absolved thou mayst be.”

“And who art thou, thou Gray Brother,
That I should shrive to thee,
When he, to whom are given the keys of earth and
heaven,
Has no power to pardon me?”

“O I am sent from a distant clime,
Five thousand miles away,
And all to absolve a foul, foul crime,
Done *here* ’twixt night and day.”

The Pilgrim kneeled him on the sand,
And thus began his say—
When on his neck an ice-cold hand
Did that Gray Brother lay.

* * * * *

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

IN THREE PARTS.

[FEW personages are so renowned in tradition as Thomas of Ercildoune, known by the appellation of *The Rhymmer*. It is agreed, on all hands, that the residence, and probably the birthplace, of this ancient bard, was Ercildoune, a village situate upon the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. The ruins of an ancient tower are still pointed out as the Rhymmer's castle. The uniform tradition bears, that his surname was Lermont, or Learment; and that the appellation of *The Rhymmer* was conferred on him in consequence of his poetical compositions. There remains, nevertheless, some doubt upon this subject.

We are better able to ascertain the period, at which Thomas of Ercildoune lived; being the latter end of the thirteenth century. It cannot be doubted, that Thomas of Ercildoune was a remarkable and important person in his own time, since very shortly after his death, we find him celebrated as a prophet, and as a poet. Whether he himself made any pretensions to the first of these characters, or whether it was gratuitously conferred upon him by the credulity of posterity, it seems difficult to decide. The popular tale bears, that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years' residence he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen, by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends, in the tower of Ercildoune, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighboring forest, and weré composedly and slowly parading the street of the village. The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return.

The following ballad is given from a copy obtained from a lady residing not far from Ercildoune, corrected and enlarged by one in Mrs. Brown's MSS. To this old tale the author has ventured to add a Second Part, consisting of a kind of Cento, from the printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the Rhymmer; and a Third Part, entirely modern, founded upon the tradition of his having returned with the hart and hind, to the Land of Faëry.]

PART FIRST.

ANCIENT.

TRUE Thomas lay on Huntlie bank ;
 A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e ;
 And there he saw a ladye bright,
 Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
 Her mantle o' the velvet fyne ;
 At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
 Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas, he pulled aff his cap,
 And louted low down to his knee,—
 "All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
 For thy peer on earth I never did see."

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said ;
 "That name does not belang to me ;
 I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
 That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said ;
 "Harp and carp along with me ;
 And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
 Sure of your bodie I will be."

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
 That weird* shall never daunton me."
 Syne he has kissed her rosy lips,
 All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said ;
 "True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me ;
 And ye maun serve me seven years,
 Through weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed ;
 She's ta'en true Thomas up behind ;
 And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
 The steed flew swifter than the wind.

* *That weird, &c.*—That destiny shall never frighten me.

O they rade on, and farther on ;
 The steed gaed swifter than the wind ;
 Until they reached a desart wide,
 And living land was left behind.

“Light down, light down, now, true Thomas.
 And lean your head upon my knee ;
 Abide, and rest a little space,
 And I will shew you ferlies three.

“O see ye not yon narrow road,
 So thick beset with thorns and briers ?—
 That is the path of righteousness,
 Though after it but few inquire.

“And see not ye that braid, braid road,
 That lies across that lily leven ?—
 That is the path of wickedness,
 Though some call it the road to heaven.

“And see not ye that bonny road,
 That winds about the fernie brae ?—
 That is the road to fair Elfland,
 Where thou and I this night maun gae.

“But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
 Whatever ye may hear or see ;
 For, if you speak word in Elflyn land,
 Ye’ll ne’er get back to your ain countrie.”

O they rade on, and farther on,
 And they waded through rivers aboon the knee
 And they saw neither sun nor moon,
 But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk, mirk night, and there was nae starr
 light,
 And they waded through red blude to the knee,
 For a’ the blude, that’s shed on earth,
 Rins through the springs o’ that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
 And she pu’d an apple frae a tree—
 “Take this for thy wages, true Thomas ;
 It will give thee the tongue that can never lie.”

“My tongue is mine ain,” true Thomas said;

“A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!

I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst, where I may be.

“I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.”—

“Now hold thy peace!” the ladye said,
“For, as I say, so must it be.”

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And, till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

PART SECOND.

ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES.

[Corspatrick (Comes Patrick), Earl of March, but more commonly taking his title from his castle of Dunbar, acted a noted part during the wars of Edward I. in Scotland. As Thomas of Ercildoune is said to have delivered to him his famous prophecy of King Alexander's death, the author has chosen to introduce him into the following ballad. All the prophetic verses are selected from Hart's publication of the Rhymer's predictions printed at Edinburgh, A. D. 1615.]

WHEN seven years were come and gane,
The sun blinked fair on pool and stream;
And Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
Like one awakened from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armor flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong;
Of giant make he 'peared to be:
He stirred his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of fausion free.

Says—“Well met, well met, true Thomas!
Some uncouth ferlies shew to me.”

Says—"Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave!
Thrice welcome, good Dunbar, to me!

"Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave,
And I will shew thee curses three,
Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

"A storm shall roar, this very hour,
From Rosse's Hills to Solway sea."—
"Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar!
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lea."

He put his hand on the earlie's head;
He shewed him a rock, beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff, beneath his steed,*
And steel-dight nobles wiped their e'e.

"The neist curse lights on Branxton Hills:
By Flodden's high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner, red as blude,
And chieftains throng wi' meikle pride.

"A Scottish king shall come full keen;
The ruddy lion beareth he:
A feathered arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to sec.

"When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say—
'For God's sake, turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray!
Why should I lose, the right is mine?
My doom is not to die this day.'†

"Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.

"There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away;

* King Alexander; killed by a fall from his horse, near Kinghorn.

† The uncertainty which long prevailed in Scotland concerning the fate of James IV., is well known.

At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil blude that day."

"Enough, enough, of curse and ban;
Some blessing shew thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie," Corspatrick said,
"Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me!"

"The first of blessings I shall thee shew,
Is by a burn, that's called of bread;*
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

"Beside that brigg, out ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a falling courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

"Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree:
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon blude sae free.
The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corses there shall be."

"But tell me now," said brave Dunbar,
"True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea?"

"A French queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain to the sea:
He of the Bruce's blude shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

"The waters worship shall his race;
Likewise' the waves of the farthest sea;
For they shall ride ower ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree."

* One of Thomas's rhymes, preserved by tradition, runs thus:

"The burn of breid
Shall run fow reid."

Bannock-burn is the brook here meant. The Scots give the name of *bannock* to a thick round cake of unleavened bread.

PART THIRD.

MODERN.

WHEN seven years more had come and gone,
 Was war through Scotland spread,
 And Ruberslaw showed high Dunyon
 His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow,
 Pitched palliouns took their room,
 And crested helms, and spears a rowe,
 Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
 Resounds the *ensenzie* ;*
 They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
 To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
 In Learmont's high and ancient hall ;
 And there were knights of great renown,
 And ladies, laced in pall.

Nor lacked they, while they sat at dine,
 The music, nor the tale,
 Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
 Nor mantling *quaighs*† of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
 When as the feast was done ;
 (In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
 The elfin harp he won.)

Hushed were the throng, both limb and tongue,
 And harpers for envy pale ;
 And armed lords leaned on their swords,
 And hearkened to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
 The prophet poured along ;
 No after bard might e'er avail
 Those numbers to prolong.

* *Ensenzie*—War-cry, or gathering word.

† *Quaighs*—Wooden cups, composed of staves hooped together.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
 Float down the tide of years,
 As, buoyant on the stormy main,
 A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's table round;
 The warrior of the lake;
 How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
 And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
 The notes melodious swell;*
 Was none excelled in Arthur's days,
 The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
 A venomed wound he bore;
 When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
 Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand;
 No med'cine could be found,
 Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
 Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue,
 She bore the leech's part;
 And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
 He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween!
 For, doomed in evil tide,
 The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
 His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
 In fairy tissue wove;
 Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
 In gay confusion strove.

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
 High reared its glittering head;
 And Avalon's enchanted vale
 In all its wonders spread.

* Alluding to Thomas the Rhymer's celebrated romance of Sir Tristrem.

Brengwain was there, and Segramore,
 And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye;
 Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
 O who could sing but he?

Through many a maze the winning song
 In changeful passion led,
 Till bent at length the listening throng
 O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand;
 With agony his heart is wrung:
 O where is Isolde's lily hand,
 And where her soothing tongue?

She comes, she comes! like flash of flame
 Can lovers' footsteps fly;
 She comes, she comes! she only came
 To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die: her latest sigh
 Joined in a kiss his parting breath:
 The gentlest pair that Britain bare
 United are in death.

There paused the harp; its lingering sound
 Died slowly on the ear;
 The silent guests still bent around,
 For still they seemed to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak:
 Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh:
 But, half ashamed, the rugged cheek
 Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream, and Learmont's tower,
 The mists of evening close;
 In camp, in castle, or in tower,
 Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
 Dreamed o'er the woful tale,
 When footsteps light, across the bent,
 The warrior's ears assail.

He starts, he wakes:—What, Richard, ho!
 Arise, my page, arise!

What venturous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies!"

Then forth they rushed: by Leader's tide,
A selcouth* sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red;
Never a word he spake but three;—
"My sand is run; my thread is spun;
This sign regardeth me."

The Elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise, he hung;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went; yet turned him oft
To view his ancient hall;
On the gray tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moonbeams fall.

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray:
In deep'ning mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

"Farewell, my fathers' ancient tower!
A long farewell," said he:
"The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power
Thou never more shalt be.

"To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And on thy hospitable hearth,
The hare shall leave her young.

* *Selcouth*—Wondrous.

‘Adieu! Adieu!’ again he cried,
 All as he turned him roun’—
 “Farewell to Leader’s silver tide!
 Farewell to Ercildoune!”

The hart and hind approached the place,
 As lingering yet he stood;
 And there, before Lord Douglas’ face,
 With them he crossed the flood.

Lord Douglas leaped on his berry-brown steed,
 And spurred him the Leader o’er;
 But, though he rode with lightning speed,
 He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
 Their wondrous course had been;
 But ne’er in haunts of living men
 Again was Thomas seen.

THE FIRE-KING.

“The blessings of the evil Genii, which are curses, were upon him.”—*Eastern Tale.*

[This ballad was written at the request of MR. LEWIS, to be inserted in his “Tales of Wonder.” It is the third in a series of four ballads, on the subject of Elementary Spirits. The story is, however, partly historical; for it is recorded that, during the struggles of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, a knight-templar called Saint Alban, deserted to the Saracens, and defeated the Christians in many combats, till he was finally routed and slain in a conflict with King Baldwin, under the walls of Jerusalem.]

BOLD knights and fair dames, to my harp give an ear,
 Of love, and of war, and of wonder to hear;
 And you haply may sigh, in the midst of your glee,
 At the tale of Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

O, see you that castle, so strong and so high?
 And see you that lady, the smile in her eye?
 And see you that palmer, from Palestine’s land,
 The shell on his hat, and the staff in his hand?

“ Now palmer, gray palmer, O tell unto me,
 What news bring you home from the Holy Countrie?
 And how goes the warfare by Galilee’s strand?
 And how fare our nobles, the flower of the land?”

“ O well goes the warfare by Galilee’s wave,
 For Gilead, and Nablous, and Ramah we have;
 And well fare our nobles by Mount Lebanon,
 For the Heathen have lost, and the Christians have
 won.”—

A fair chain of gold ’mid her ringlets there hung;
 O’er the palmer’s gray locks the fair chain has she flung;
 “ O palmer, gray palmer, this chain be thy fee,
 For the news thou hast brought from the Holy Countrie.

“ O palmer, good palmer, by Galilee’s wave,
 O saw you Count Albert, the gentle and brave?
 When the Crescent went back, and the Red-cross rushed
 on,
 O saw ye him foremost on Mount Lebanon?”—

“ O lady, fair lady, the tree green it grows;
 O lady, fair lady, the stream pure it flows;
 Your castle stands strong, and your hopes soar on high.
 But lady, fair lady, all blossoms to die.

“ The green boughs they wither, the thunderbolt falls,
 It leaves of your castle but levin-scorched walls;
 The pure stream runs muddy; the gay hope is gone;
 Count Albert is pris’ner on Mount Lebanon.”—

O she has ta’en a horse, should be fleet at her speed;
 And she has ta’en a sword, should be sharp at her need.
 And she has ta’en shipping for Palestine’s land,
 To ransom Count Albert from Soldanrie’s hand.

Small thought had Coent Albert on fair Rosalie,
 Small thought on his faith, or his knighthood, had he;
 A heathenish damsel his light heart had won,
 The Soldan’s fair daughter of Mount Lebanon.

“ O Christian, brave Christian, my love wouldst thou be,
 Three things must thou do ere I hearken to thee:
 Our laws and our worship on thee shalt thou take;
 And this thou shalt first do for Zulema’s sake.

“And, next, in the cavern, where burns evermore
The mystical flame which the Curdmans adore,
Alone, and in silence, three nights shalt thou wake;
And this thou shalt next do for Zulema’s sake.

“And, last, thou shalt aid us with council and hand,
To drive the Frank robber from Palestine’s land;
For my lord and my love then Count Albert I’ll take,
When all this is accomplished for Zulema’s sake.”—

He has thrown by his helmet and cross-handled sword,
Renouncing his knighthood, denying his Lord;
He has ta’en the green caftan, and turban put on,
For the love of the maiden of fair Lebanon.

And in the dread cavern, deep, deep under ground,
Which fifty steel gates and steel portals surround,
He has watched until daybreak, but sight saw he none,
Save the flame burning bright on its altar of stone.

Amazed was the princess, the soldan amazed,
Sore murmured the priests as on Albert they gazed;
They searched all his garments, and, under his weeds
They found, and took from him, his rosary beads.

Again in the cavern, deep, deep under ground,
He watched the lone night, while the winds whistled
round;
Far off was their murmur, it came not more nigh,
The flame burned unmoved, and naught else did he spy.

Loud murmured the priests, and amazed was the king,
While many dark spells of their witchcraft they sing;
They searched Albert’s body, and, lo! on his breast
Was the sign of the Cross, by his father impressed.

The priests they erase it with care and with pain,
And the recreant returned to the cavern again;
But, as he descended, a whisper there fell!—
It was his good angel, who bids him farewell!

High bristled his hair, his heart fluttered and beat,
And he turned him five steps, half resolved to retreat;
But his heart it was hardened, his purpose was gone,
When he thought on the maiden of fair Lebanon.

Scarce passed he the archway, the threshold scarce trod,
When the winds from the four points of heaven were
abroad;

They made each steel portal to rattle and ring,
And, borne on the blast, came the dread Fire-King.

Full sore rocked the cavern whene'er he drew nigh,
The fire on the altar blazed bickering and high:
In volcanic explosions the mountains proclaim
The dreadful approach of the Monarch of Flame.

Unmeasured in height, undistinguished in form,
His breath it was lightning, his voice it was storm;
I ween the stout heart of Count Albert was tame,
When he saw in his terrors the Monarch of Flame.

In his hand a broad falchion blue-glimmered through
smoke,
And Mount Lebanon shook as the monarch he spoke:—
“With this brand shalt thou conquer, thus long, and
no more,
Till thou bend to the Cross, and the Virgin adore.”

The cloud-shrouded arm gives the weapon; and, see,
The recreant receives the charmed gift on his knee:
The thunders growl distant, and faint gleam the fires,
As, borne on his whirlwind, the Phantom retires.

Count Albert has armed him the Paynim among,
Though his heart it was false, yet his arm it was
strong;
And the Red-cross waxed faint, and the Crescent
came on,
From the day he commanded on Mount Lebanon.

From Lebanon's forests to Galilee's wave,
The sands of Saragar drank the blood of the brave;
Till the Knights of the Temple, and Knights of Saint
John,
With Salem's King Baldwin, against him came on.

The war-cymbals clattered, the trumpets replied,
The lances were couched, and they closed on each side;
And horsemen and horses Count Albert o'erthrew,
Till he pierced the thick tumult King Baldwin unto.

Against the charmed blade which Count Albert did
wield

The fence had been vain of the King's Red-cross shield;
But a Page thrust him forward the monarch before,
And cleft the proud turban the renegade wore.

So fell was the dint, that Count Albert stooped low
Before the crossed shield, to his steel saddle-bow;
And scarce had he bent to the Red-cross his head,—
“*Bonne grace, notre Dame,*” he unwittingly said.

Sore sighed the charmed sword, for its virtue was o'er,
It sprung from his grasp, and was never seen more;
But true men have said, that the lightning's red wing
Did waft back the brand to the dread Fire-King.

He clenched his set teeth, and his gauntleted hand;
He stretched, with one buffet, that Page on the strand;
As back from the stripling the broken casque rolled,
You might see the blue eyes, and the ringlets of gold.

Short time had Count Albert in horror to stare
On those death-swimming eyeballs, and blood-clotted
hair;

For down came the Templars, like Cedron in flood,
And dyed their long lances in Saracen blood.

The Saracens, Curdmans, and Ishmaelites yield
To the scallop, the saltier, and crossleted shield;
And the eagles were gorged with the infidel dead,
From Bethsaida's fountains to Naphthali's head.

The battle is over on Bethsaida's plain.—

Oh, who is yon Paynim lies stretched 'mid the slain?
And who is yon Page lying cold at his knee?—
Oh, who but Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

The Lady was buried in Salem's blessed bound,
The Count he was left to the vulture and hound:
Her soul to high mercy Our Lady did bring;
His went on the blast to the dread Fire-King.

Yet many a minstrel, in harping, can tell,
How the Red Cross it conquered, the Crescent it fell;
And lords and gay ladies have sighed, 'mid their glee,
At the tale of Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

FREDERICK AND ALICE.

[This tale is imitated, rather than translated, from a fragment introduced in Goethe's "Claudina von Villa Bella," where it is sung by a member of a gang of banditti, to engage the attention of the family, while his companions break into the castle.]

FREDERICK leaves the land of France,
Homeward hastes his steps to measure;
Careless casts the parting glance,
On the scene of former pleasure;

Joying in his prancing steed,
Keen to prove his untried blade,
Hope's gay dreams the soldier lead
Over mountain, moor, and glade.

Wretched, ruined, left forlorn,
Lovely Alice wept alone;
Mourned o'er love's fond contract torn,
Hope, and peace, and honor flown.

Mark her breast's convulsive throbs!
See, the tear of anguish flows;—
Mingling soon with bursting sobs,
Loud the laugh of frenzy rose.

Wild she curs'd, and wild she prayed;
Seven long days and nights are o'er;
Death in pity brought his aid,
As the village bell struck four.

Far from her, and far from France,
Faithless Fred'rick onward rides;
Marking, blithe, the morning's glance
Mantling o'er the mountain's sides.

Heard ye not the boding shout,
As the tongue of yonder tower
Slowly, to the hills around,
Told the fourth, the fated hour?

Starts the steed, and snuffs the air,
 Yet no cause of dread appears;
 Bristles high the rider's hair,
 Struck with strange mysterious fears.

Desperate, as his terrors rise,
 In the steed the spur he hides;
 From himself in vain he flies;
 Anxious, restless, on he rides.

Seven long days, and seven long nights,
 Wild he wandered, woe the while!
 Ceaseless care, and causeless fright,
 Urge his footsteps many a mile.

Dark the seventh sad night descends;
 Rivers swell, and rain-streams pour;
 While the deafening thunder lends
 All the terrors of its roar.

Weary, wet, and spent with toil,
 Where his head shall Fred'rick hide;
 Where, but in yon ruined aisle,
 By the lightning's flash descried.

To the portal, dank and low,
 Fast his steed the wanderer bound;
 Down a ruined staircase slow,
 Next his darkling way he wound.

Long drear vaults before him lie;
 Glimmering lights are seen to glide!--
 "Blessed Mary, hear my cry!
 Deign a sinner's steps to guide!"--

Often lost their quivering beam,
 Still the lights move slow before,
 Till they rest their ghastly gleam
 Right against an iron door.

Thundering voices from within,
 Mixed with peals of laughter, rose;
 As they fell, a solemn strain
 Lent its wild and wondrous close!

'Midst the din, he seemed to hear
 Voice of friends, by death removed;--

Well he knew that solemn air,
 'Twas the lay that Alice loved.—

Hark! for now a solemn knell
 Four times on the still night broke;
 Four times, at its deadened swell,
 Echoes from the ruins spoke.

As the lengthened clangors die,
 Slowly opes the iron door!
 Straight a banquet met his eye,
 But a funeral's form it wore!

Coffins for the seats extend;
 All with black the board was spread;
 Girt by parent, brother, friend,
 Long since numbered with the dead!

Alice, in her grave-clothes bound,
 Ghastly smiling, points a seat;
 All arose, with thundering sound;
 All the expected stranger greet.

High their meagre arms they wave,
 Wild their notes of welcome swell;—
 'Welcome, traitor, to the grave!
 Perjured, bid the light farewell!"

THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

[This is a translation, or rather an imitation, of the *Wilde Jager* of the German poet Burger. The tradition upon which it is founded bears, that formerly a Wildgrave, or keeper of a royal forest, named Falkenburgh, was so much addicted to the pleasures of the chase, and otherwise so extremely profligate and cruel, that he not only followed this unhallowed amusement on the Sabbath, and other days consecrated to religious duty, but accompanied it with the most unheard-of oppression upon the poor peasants, who were under his vassalage. When this second Nimrod died, the people adopted a superstition, founded probably on the many various uncouth sounds heard in the depth of a German forest, during the silence of the night. They con-

ceived they still heard the cry of the Wildgrave's hounds; and the well-known cheer of the deceased hunter, the sounds of his horses' feet, and the rustling of the branches before the game, the pack, and the sportsmen, are also distinctly discriminated; but the phantoms are rarely, if ever, visible.]

THE Wildgrave winds his bugle-horn,
 To horse, to horse! halloo, halloo!
 His fiery courser snuffs the morn,
 And thronging serfs their lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
 Dash through the bush, the brier, the brake;
 While answering hound, and horn, and steed,
 The mountain echoes startling wake.

The beams of God's own hallowed day
 Had painted yonder spire with gold,
 And, calling sinful man to pray,
 Loud, long, and deep, the bell had tolled!

But still the Wildgrave onward rides;
 Halloo, halloo! and, hark again!
 When, spurring from opposing sides,
 Two Stranger Horsemen join the train.

Who was each Stranger, left and right,
 Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
 The right-hand steed was silver white,
 The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand horseman, young and fair,
 His smile was like the morn of May;
 The left, from eye of tawny glare,
 Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He waved his huntsman's cap on high,
 Cried, "Welcome, welcome, noble lord!
 What sport on earth, or sea, or sky,
 To match the princely chase, afford?"

"Cease thy loud bugle's clanging knell,"
 Cried the fair youth, with silver voice;
 "And for devotion's choral swell,
 Exchange the rude/unhallowed noise.

"To-day, the ill-omened chase forbear,
 Yon bell yet summons to the fane;

To-day the Warning Spirit hear,
To-morrow thou mayst mourn in vain."

"Away, and sweep the glades along!"
The Sable Hunter hoarse replies;
"To muttering monks leave matin-song,
And bells, and books, and mysteries."

The Wildgrave spurred his ardent steed,
And, launching forward with a bound,
"Who, for thy drowsy priestlike rede,
Would leave the jovial horn and hound?"

"Hence, if our manly sport offend!
With pious fools go chant and pray:—
Well hast thou spoke, my dark-browed friend;
Halloo, halloo! and, hark away!"

The Wildgrave spurred his courser light,
O'er moss and moor, o'erholt and hill;
And on the left, and on the right,
Each Stranger Horseman followed still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
A stag more white than mountain snow,
And louder rung the Wildgrave's horn,
"Hark, forward, forward! holla, ho!"

A heedless wretch has crossed the way;
He gasps, the thundering hoofs below;—
But, live who can, or die who may,
Still, "Forward, forward!" on they go.

See, where yon simple fences meet,
A field with autumn's blessings crowned;
See, prostrate at the Wildgrave's feet,
A husbandman, with toil embrowned:

"O mercy, mercy, noble lord!
Spare the poor's pittance," was his cry,
"Earned by the sweat these brows have poured,
In scorching hour of fierce July."

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
The impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
But furious holds the onward way.

“Away, thou hound; so basely born,
Or dread the scourge’s echoing blow!”—
Then loudly rung his bugle-horn,
“Hark, forward, forward, holla, ho!”

So said, so done:—A single bound
Clears the poor laborer’s humble pale;
Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
Like dark December’s stormy gale.

And man and horse, and hound and horn,
Destructive sweep the field along;
While, joying o’er the wasted corn,
Fell Famine marks the maddening throng.

Again up-roused, the timorous prey
Scours moss and moor, and holt and hill;
Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appeared;
He seeks the shelter of the crowd,
Amid the flock’s domestic herd
His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O’er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
His track the steady bloodhounds trace;
O’er moss and moor, unwearied still,
The furious Earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall;
“O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
These herds, a widow’s little all;
These flocks, an orphan’s fleecy care.”

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
The Earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
But furious keeps the onward way.

—“Unmannered dog! To stop my sport
Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
Though human spirits, of thy sort,
Were tenants of these barren kine!”—

Again he winds his bugle-horn,
“Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!”

And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall;
Down sinks their mangled herdsman near;
The murderous cries the stag appall,—
Again he starts, new-nerved by fear.

With blood besmeared, and white with foam,
While big the tears of anguish pour,
He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
The humble hermit's hallowed bower.

But man and horse, and horn and hound,
Fast rattling on his traces go;
The sacred chapel rung around
With, "Hark away! and, holla, ho!"

All mild, amid the rout profane,
The holy hermit poured his prayer;—
"Forbear with blood God's house to stain;
Revere his altar, and forbear!

"The meanest brute has rights to plead,
Which, wronged by cruelty, or pride,
Draw vengeance on the ruthless head:—
Be warned at length, and turn aside."

Still the Fair Horseman anxious pleads;
The Black, wild whooping, points the prey.—
Alas! the Earl no warning heeds,
But frantic keeps the forward way.

"Holy or not, or right or wrong,
Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
Not sainted martyrs' sacred song,
Not God himself, shall make me turn!"

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"—
But off, on whirlwind's pinions borne,
The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man, and horn and hound,
And clamor of the chase, was gone;
For hoofs, and howls, and bugle sound,
A deadly silence reigned alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted Earl around;
 He strove in vain to wake his horn;
 In vain to call; for not a sound
 Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds;
 No distant baying reached his ears:
 His courser, rooted to the ground,
 The quickening spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades,
 Dark, as the darkness of the grave;
 And not a sound the still invades,
 Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o'er the sinner's humbled head
 At length the solemn silence broke;
 And, from a cloud of swarthy red,
 The awful voice of thunder spoke.

"Oppressor of creation fair!
 Apostate Spirits' hardened tool!
 Scorned of God! Scourge of the poor!
 The measure of thy cup is full.

"Be chased forever through the wood;
 Forever roam the affrighted wild;
 And let thy fate instruct the proud,
 God's meanest creature is his child."

'Twas hushed:—One flash, of sombre glare,
 With yellow tinged the forest brown;
 Up rose the Wildgrave's bristling hair,
 And horror chilled each nerve and bone.

Cold poured the sweat in freezing rill;
 A rising wind began to sing;
 And louder, louder, louder still,
 Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call;—Her entrails rend:
 From yawning rifts, with many a yell,
 Mixed with sulphurous flames, ascend
 The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly Huntsman next arose,
 Well may I guess, but dare not tell;

His eye like midnight lightning glows,
His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The Wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
With many a shriek of helpless woe;
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
And, "Hark away, and holla, ho!"

With wild despair's reverted eye,
Close, close behind, he marks the throng,
With bloody fangs, and eager cry;
In frantic fear he scours along.—

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
Till time itself shall have an end:
By day, they scour earth's caverned space,
At midnight's witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
That oft the lated peasant hears;
Appalled, he signs the frequent cross,
When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear
For human pride, for human woe,
When, at his midnight mass, he hears
The infernal cry of "Holla, ho!"

WAR-SONG

OF THE

ROYAL EDINBURGH LIGHT DRAGOONS

WRITTEN DURING THE APPREHENSION OF AN INVASION.

To horse! to horse! the standard flies,
The bugles sound the call;
The Gallic navy stems the seas,
The voice of Battle's on the breeze,
Arouse ye, one and all!

From high Dunedin's towers we come,
 A band of brothers true;
 Our casques the leopard's spoils surround,
 With Scotland's hardy thistle crowned;
 We boast the red and blue.*

Though tamely crouch to Gallia's frown,
 Dull Holland's tardy train;
 Their ravished toys though Romans mourn,
 Though gallant Switzers vainly spurn,
 And, foaming, gnaw the chain;

O! had they marked the avenging call
 Their brethren's murder gave,
 Disunion ne'er their ranks had mown,
 Nor patriot valor, desperate grown,
 Sought freedom in the grave!

Shall we, too, bend the stubborn head,
 In Freedom's temple born,
 Dress our pale cheek in timid smile,
 To hail a master in our isle,
 Or brook a victor's scorn?

No! though destruction o'er the land
 Come pouring as a flood,
 The sun, that sees our falling day,
 Shall mark our sabres' deadly sway,
 And set that night in blood.

For gold let Gallia's legions fight
 Or plunder's bloody gain;
 Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
 To guard our King, to fence our Law,
 Nor shall their edge be vain.

If ever breath of British gale
 Shall fan the tri-color,
 Or footstep of invader rude,
 With rapine foul, and red with blood,
 Pollute our happy shore,—

Then farewell home! and farewell friends!
 Adieu each tender tie!

* The Royal Colors.

Resolved, we mingle in the tide,
Where charging squadrons furious ride,
To conquer, or to die.

To horse! to horse! the sabres gleam;
High sounds our bugle call;
Combined by honor's sacred tie,
Our word is, *Laws and Liberty!*
March forward, one and all!

THE NORMAN HORSE-SHOE.

[The Welch, inhabiting a mountainous country, and possessing only an inferior breed of horses, were usually unable to encounter the shock of the Anglo-Norman cavalry. Occasionally, however, they were successful in repelling the invaders; and the following verses are supposed to celebrate a defeat of CLARE, Earl of Striguil and Pembroke, and of NEVILLE, Baron of Chepstow, and Lord Marchers of Monmouthshire. Rymny is a stream which divides the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan: Caerphili, the scene of the supposed battle is a vale upon its banks, dignified by the ruins of a very ancient castle.]

Air—The War-song of the Men of Glamorgan.

I.

RED glows the forge in Striguil's bounds,
And hammers din, and anvil sounds,
And armours, with iron toil,
Bare many a steed for battle's broil.
Foul foul the hand which bends the steel
Around the conquer's thundering heel,
That e'er shall dint a noble wound
On fair Glamorgan's verdant ground!

II.

From Chepstow's towers ere dawn of morn,
Was heard afar the bugle horn,
And forth in banded pomp and pride,
Stout Clare and fiery Neville ride.

They swore their banners broad should gleam,
 In crimson light, on Rymny's stream ;
 They vowed, Caerphili's sod should feel
 The Norman charger's spurning heel.

III.

And sooth they swore—the sun arose,
 And Rymny's wave with crimson glows ;
 For Clare's red banner, floating wide,
 Rolled down the stream to Severn's tide !
 And sooth they vowed—the trampled green
 Showed where hot Neville's charge had been :
 In every sable hoof-tramp stood
 A Norman horseman's curdling blood !

IV.

Old Chepstow's brides may curse the toil,
 That armed stout Clare for Cambrian broil ;
 Their orphans long the art may rue,
 For Neville's war-horse forged the shoe.
 No more the stamp of armed steed
 Shall dint Glamorgan's velvet mead ;
 Nor trace be there, in early spring,
 Save of the Fairies' emerald ring.

THE DYING BARD.

[The Welch tradition bears, that a Bard, on his death-bed, demanded his harp, and played the air to which these verses are adapted ; requesting that it might be performed at his funeral.]

AIR—*Daffydz Gangwen.*

I.

DINAS EMLINN, lament ; for the moment is nigh,
 When mute in the woodlands thine echoes shall die ;
 No more by sweet Teivi Cadwallon shall rave,
 And mix his wild notes with the wild-dashing wave.

II.

In spring and in autumn thy glories of shade,
 Unhonored shall flourish, unhonored shall fade;
 For soon shall be lifeless the eye and the tongue,
 That viewed them with rapture, with rapture that sung.

III.

Thy sons, Dinas Emlinn, may march in their pride,
 And chase the proud Saxon from Prestatyn's side;
 But where is the harp shall give life to their name?
 And where is the bard shall give heroes their fame?

IV.

And oh, Dinas Emlinn! thy daughters so fair,
 Who heave the white bosom, and wave the dark hair,
 What tuneful enthusiast shall worship their eye,
 When half of their charms with Cadwallon shall die?

V.

Then adieu, silver Teivi! I quit thy loved scene,
 To join the dim choir of the bards who have been;
 With Lewarch, and Meilor, and Merlin the Old,
 And sage Taliessin, high harping to hold.

VI.

And adieu, Dinas Emlinn! still green be thy shades,
 Unconquered thy warriors, and matchless thy maids!
 And thou who's faint warblings my weakness can tell,
 Farewell, my loved Harp! my last treasure, farewell!

 THE MAID OF TORO

O, low shone the sun on the fair lake of Toro,
 And weak were the whispers that waded the dark wood,
 All as a fair maiden, who pined in sorrow,
 Sorely sighed to the stream, and wept to the flood.

“O saints! from the mansions of bliss lowly bending;
 Sweet Virgin! who hearest the suppliant’s cry;
 Now grant my petition, in anguish ascending,
 My Henry restore, or let Eleanor die!”

All distant and faint were the sounds of the battle,
 With the breezes they rise, with the breezes they fail.
 Till the shout, and the groan, and the conflict’s dread rattle
 And the chase’s wild clamor, came loading the gale.
 Breathless she gazed on the woodlands so dreary;
 Slowly approaching a warrior was seen;
 Life’s ebbing tide marked his footsteps so weary,
 Cleft was his hemlet, and woe was his mien.

“O, save thee, fair maid, for our armies are flying!
 O, save thee, fair maid, for thy guardian is low!
 Deadly cold on yon heath thy brave Henry is lying;
 And fast through the woodland approaches the foe.”—
 Scarce could he falter the tidings of sorrow,
 And scarce could she hear them, benumbed with despair:
 And when the sun sunk on the sweet lake of Toro,
 Forever he set to the Brave and the Fair.

HELLVELLYN.

[In the spring of 1805, a young gentleman of talents, and of a most amiable disposition, perished by losing his way on the mountain Hellvellyn. His remains were not discovered till three months afterwards, when they were found guarded by a faithful terrier-bitch, his constant attendant during frequent solitary rambles through the wilds of Cumberland and Westmoreland.]

I CLIMBED the dark brow of the mighty Hellvellyn,
 Lakes and mountains beneath me gleamed misty and wide,
 All was still, save by fits when the eagle was yelling,
 And starting around me the echoes replied.
 On the right, Striden-edge round the Red-tarn was bending,
 And Catchedicam its left verge was defending,
 One huge nameless rock in the front was ascending,
 When I marked the sad spot where the wanderer had died.

Dark green was that spot 'mid the brown mountain-heather,
Where the Pilgrim of Nature lay stretched in decay,
Like the corpse of an outcast abandoned to weather,
Till the mountain-winds wasted the tenantless clay.
Nor yet quite deserted, though lonely extended,
For, faithful in death, his mute favorite attended,
The much-loved remains of her master defended,
And chased the hill-fox and the raven away.

How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?
When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou start?
How many long days and long weeks didst thou number,
Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thy heart?
And, oh! was it meet, that,—no requiem read o'er him,
No mother to weep, and no friend to deplore him,
And thou, little guardian, alone stretched before him,—
Unhonored the Pilgrim from life should depart?

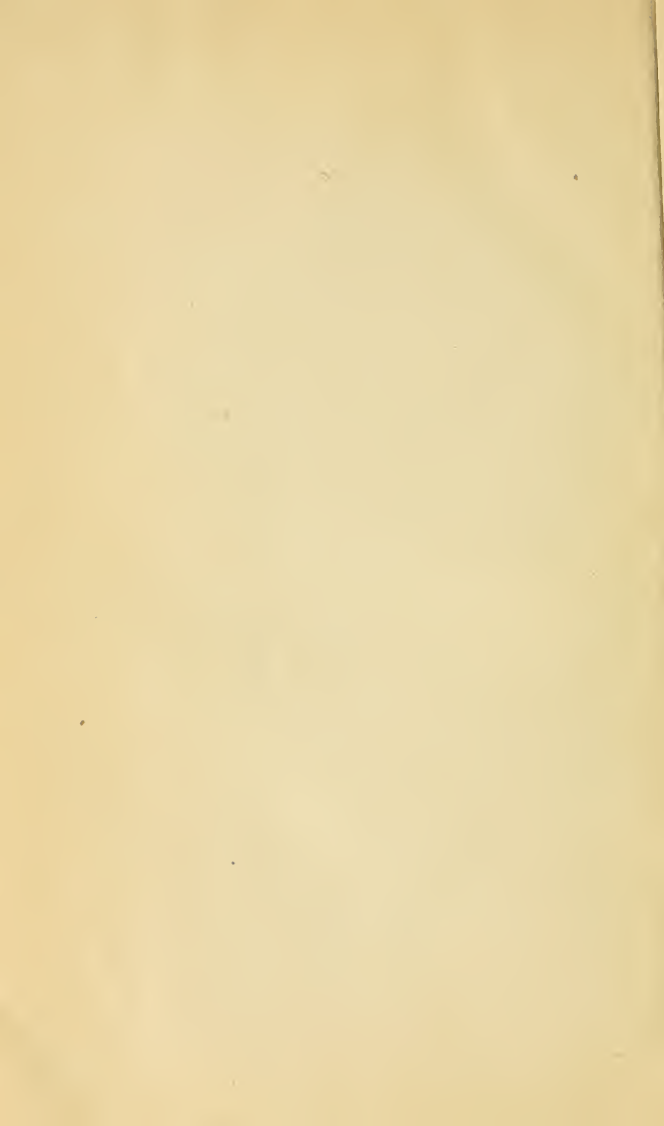
When a Prince to the fate of the Peasant has yielded,
The tap'stry waves dark round the dim-lighted hall;
With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded,
And pages stand mute by the canopied pall:
Through the courts, at deep midnight, the torches are
gleaming;
In the proudly-arched chapel the banners are beaming;
Far adown the long aisle sacred music is streaming,
Lamenting a Chief of the People should fall.

But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature,
To lay down thy head like the meek mountain lamb;
When, wildered, he drops from some cliff huge in stature,
And draws his last sob by the side of his dam.
And more stately thy couch by this desert lake lying,
Thy obsequies sung by the gray plover flying,
With one faithful friend but to witness thy dying,
In the arms of Hellvellyn and Cathedicam.

THE END.



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